THE

8.

NEGRO SLAVES,

A

DRAMATIC-HISTORICAL PIECE,

IN THREE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

THE PRESIDENT DE KOTZEBUE.

Form'd with the same capacity of pain,
The same desire of pleasure and of ease,
Why feels not man for man?

THE WRONGS OF AFRICA.

LONDON:

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1796.

DEDICATION,

BY THE TRANSLATOR,

TO

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

FRIEND OF NEGROES!

ALLOW me to introduce myſelf as having long been an attentive obſerver of your active zeal for the aboliſhment of ſlavery, and eſtabliſhing ſo large a portion of mankind in the natural rights of humanity: it is therefore under ſuch an impreſſion, that an unknown humble Tranſlator ventures to make a firſt offering to you of theſe endeavors to bring the Engliſh reader acquainted with the following little piece.—The hiſtories, the foundations of which you have traced, and know to be too genuine, are there wrought up into a highly intereſting little plot, to ſerve the ſame cauſe, in which you have been working ſo many years paſt; and you will there ſee that the Germans have a juſt ve-

neration for the name of WILBERFORCE, and can echo it with tranſport.—The ſpirit of the German writings is peculiarly affectionate, and they have been eagerly received of late in England.—The ſufferings of the unfortunate claſs of Slaves cannot fail to excite commiſeration and enthuſiaſm in every tender heart.—On both theſe accounts, I flatter myſelf the following pages will be acceptable, and that you, Sir, will not object to the liberty taken of placing your name at the head of them, by one who has no other pretenſions than thoſe of a diligent ſtudent of the German language, an enthuſiaſt for all the dearer intereſts of humanity, and a ſincere admirer of your character, and part in life.

April 21, 1796.

DEDICATION,

BY THE AUTHOR,

TO THE

DANISH COUNSELLOR OF JUSTICE

AND

KING OF DENMARK's AGENT,

AT THE

RUSSIAN COURT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT has long been my intention to tell you in print, what I have ſo often expreſſed to you for theſe thirteen years paſt, both in writing and by word of mouth, that I heartily love, and highly eſteem you. And I fixed on the Negro-ſlaves as the vehicle, becauſe you are a Dane; becauſe the Danes were the firſt who diſſolved the fetters of this unfortunate race, and becauſe I am ambitious of making known my gratitude as a citizen of the world, through you, to the whole Daniſh nation.—I might certainly

have addreſſed your monarch, I might have graced theſe pages with the exalted name of Bernſtoff—too great for the application of an epithet; but the ingenuous overflowings of philanthropy would moſt probably have been miſtaken for cold flattery. And I prefer ſpeaking at once to the honeſt Danes, who underſtand me, and who know that I never ſell my praiſes.—Here in rural ſolitude, at a diſtance from all that can be juſtly or unjuſtly called great, ſurrounded only by the charms of nature; here, where love, friendſhip, independence crown my head daily with freſh flowers; from hence will I ſtretch out my hand to my brave friend, and intreat him in the midſt of his more public walk, ſometimes to caſt an eye on the peaceful ſhore, where his friend has raiſed himſelf a cottage under ſhady elms.

July 13*th*, 1795.

PREFACE

BY THE AUTHOR.

THE Author entreats his readers, ſpectators, and critics, not to conſider this piece merely as a drama. It is intended to repreſent at one view all the horrible cruelties which are practiſed towards our black brethren. The poet has given them a ſimple cloathing, without any of the embelliſhments of invention. Raynal's Hiſtoire Philoſophique, Selle's Hiſtory of the Negro-trade, Sprengel on Negro-trade, Iſert's Travels into Guinea, the famous Black Code, and ſeveral ſcattered Tracts in periodical works, have fully ſupplied him with the materials. It is with a deep ſigh that he is forced to acknowledge that not one melancholy fact is

brought forth in this piece, which was not ſtrictly founded in truth. Even the cataſtrophe itſelf is known to have taken place, and Ada's laſt narration is borrowed from Raynal.* The prayer of the Slaves over the grave of their maſter is an affecting anecdote which is related by the great and good Albuquerque. † The Author is not aſhamed to confeſs that while he was writing this piece he ſhed a thouſand tears. Should his readers or ſpectators mix their tears with his, his labor would then have ſome reward.

A few words for Negroes in general. There are philoſophers who believe that nature has made as much difference between the Negroes and Europeans in their intellectual capacities as between the cur-dog and the hound. I will relate two authentic anecdotes, after the reading of which, each may himſelf judge of the juſtice of this idea.

* Hiſt. Philoſophique & Politique. tom. 5. liv. 14. chap. 44. p. 212.

† Alphonſe Albuquerque, nommé par la cour de Liſbonne vice-roi de l'Inde; le plus éclairé des Portuguais qui fuſſent paſſés en Aſie. En 1515, Il mourut à Goa, adoré des Indiens.—Raynal's Hiſt. Philoſ. tom. 1. p. 61—94.

Murray * was left ſick upon the African coaſt. A Negro took him to his home, and nurſed him. A Dutch ſhip appeared, ſtole ſome men on the banks, and eſcaped. The father and brother of the ſtolen were enraged, they haſtened down to the cottage where Murray lay, and wanted to ſacrifice him to their revenge. His charitable hoſt came forth to the door; "You muſt firſt kill me, he cried, before you touch a hair of my gueſt. Kill the robber wherever you find him, but not an innocent ſick man, whom ſacred hoſpitality protects.—Would you for ever ſtamp ſuch a diſgrace on my cottage that no ſtranger ſhould again aſk of me a draught of palm-wine?" The Negroes at this took ſhame to themſelves, and returned, and wept over their loſt brethren, but refrained from exerciſing any revenge on the innocent White; they even acknowledged to Murray himſelf how happy they were at having been deterred from executing a crime, which would have cauſed them eternal remorſe.

Louis Defro' leaux ſold his plantation and returned to his own country. The charms of the

* Raynal's Hiſt. Philoſ. tom. 4. liv. 11. chap. 28. p. 155.

metropolis ſoon abſorbed his whole fortune, and he found himſelf obliged to fly a beggar to America. There, where his European friends coldly withdrew from him, a Negro threw himſelf at his feet, (whom he had formerly loaded with acts of generoſity, and to whom, at laſt, he had given his freedom.) The diligent honeſt man had in the mean time gained himſelf a little independency, and was in poſſeſſion of a houſe and garden, a wife, and a child. He embraced the knees of his old maſter, and would not quit him, till with prayers he had prevailed upon him to conſent to partake his dwelling, and to accept an annuity from him of 1500 livres.— Both theſe men were living in the year 1774.

Many traits in this piece are too horrible, and therefore, in the repreſentation, ſeveral of them were omitted. This might be attended with advantage on the theatre; but in the publication, the author has been obliged to reſtore all the omiſſions, otherwiſe his piece would not have had any claim to the title of an Hiſtorical Piece.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

JOHN, a rich Planter.

WILLIAM, his Brother.

ADA, LILLI, } Two Young Female Negro-Slaves.

AYOS, ZAMEO, } Negro-Slaves.

TRURO, an Old Free Negro.

PAUL, the Superintendent or Overſeer of the Slaves.

MALE and FEMALE NEGROES.

The Scene is in the Iſland of Jamaica.

THE

NEGRO SLAVES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Room in JOHN'S *Houſe.* (ADA *working at a Cotton-Mill.*—LILLI *dances, while ſhe beats a ſmall Kettle-Drum and ſings to it.*)

LILLI.

STOPS and takes breath)—Oh I muſt reſt.

ADA.

Are you tired at laſt?

LILLI.

Yes, I am tired; but the body is not ſo ſoon exhauſted as the mind; we can dance longer than think.

ADA.

Do we not always think ?

LILLI.

Yes, unfortunately ! Alas, it were better for a ſlave never to think.

ADA.

And never to feel !

LILLI.

And to do every thing ſleeping. Doſt not thou think ſo, Ada ?—If one could ſleep for ever !

ADA.

In the grave ?

LILLI.

Oh no. On flowers rather.

ADA.

Is not that the ſame thing ? Death is ſleep without breathing.

LILLI.

But ſo cold—ſo loneſome !

ADA.

And without dreams.

LILLI.

So much the worſe ! Dreams are the beſt gifts to man in this world.

ADA.

Thou art very right. My ſleep is one continued dream of him!

LILLI.

And thy waking moments too. It is ridiculous and teazing to have a man live ſo in one's dreams.—Well! No man's image dances around my bed.

ADA.

Unfortunate me! Reſt is a ſtranger in my chamber.

LILLI.

Love and Reſt are a couple of children who quarrel every moment at their play—or rather, Love only is the child; Reſt is an old man whom the wild boy plucks by the beard.

ADA.

Happy girl! to whom the laughing ſide of every thing preſents itſelf.

LILLI.

Do as I do; forget becauſe you muſt.

ADA.

I cannot,—and I would not, if I could; every object around, that bears the moſt diſtant analogy, brings before me the image of my loſt huſband.—If I accidentally ſee a man come out of a wood, with his gun on his ſhoulder, and his

bird ſlain—juſt ſo did he come home from his ſport. If I behold another on the ſea-ſhore angling for fiſh;—juſt ſo was he wont to ſit while I looked for ſpeckled ſhells to adorn myſelf with, for him.—The ſound of the kettle-drum reminds me of his flexible limbs in dancing; and when the gentle zephyrs wanton, methinks I ſee the winds at play with his curling woolly hair.

LILLI.

It is vain to think of living for others.

ADA.

Alas! the moſt ſatisfactory hours with which mankind are bleſſed, are thoſe in which the happineſs of others is interwoven.

LILLI.

Man and wife muſt form one whole? Be it ſo! but this whole muſt reſemble the polypus. Cut it aſunder, and then each part exiſts for itſelf. (*She eats of a pine-apple which ſtands on the table*) Dancing makes me thirſty. Will you eat any pine-apple?

ADA.

I can never look at that fruit, without growing melancholy.—In the laſt beautiful evening of our tranquil happineſs, when he had been planting bananas all the day in a hot ſun, and had watered them with the ſweat of his brow, when he came home from the field, and threw himſelf tired on the bank, then an unfortunate longing

poſſeſſed me, to eat a pine-apple. In a moment he took fright for the pledge of our love, which I was then bearing; he ſprung up, forgot his fatigue, and ran to ſatisfy my childiſh wiſh.—I ſtood before the cottage and watched him from the meadow over the hill till the declivity hid him from my ſight. There he diſappeared in the wood—He diſappeared!—and I have never ſeen him ſince! I continued to ſtand, and ſmile in the ſetting-ſun, with eager impatience waiting his return, when theſe pirates, who had landed ſecretly on the ſea-ſhore, ſuddenly laid hands on me, and carried me off ſenſeleſs. Oh think of the miſerable man, when he found his cottage empty, and echoed my name to no purpoſe over the hills.

LILLI.

And is thine a worſe caſe than mine? I was ſold by my own mother. God bleſs her! She was very poor.

ADA.

Thou haſt the conſolation of having relieved thy mother. But what have I?

LILLI.

Time and habit.

ADA.

Alas! Time will not efface all the paſt, and habit merely covers the gulph like ruſhes in the

ſea; if you once forget to advance gently, you ſink directly.

LILLI.

Oh no. Habit will at laſt give variety to a priſon, though it were no larger than a cocoa-nut. (*She beats the drum.*) Throw thy work aſide, and let us dance.

ADA.

I cannot do what, if he ſaw me, I ſhould be aſhamed of.

LILLI.

Aſhamed of? Dancing is ſacred. Haſt thou not often danced in the temple of Fetiche?*

ADA.

And yet in dancing there is always an expreſſion of joy.—He weeps, and ſhall I dance?

LILLI.

If thou wilt not, I muſt dance alone; with every ſtep, I drive away a care, and every ſtroke of the drum ſtuns ſome diſagreeable thought. (*She dances, ſings, and drums.*)

ADA.

Happy girl! who winds out her days with as little thought, as I this cotton.

* The Fetiches are deities of the Negroes of Guinea.—For ſome account of them, ſee Bell's Pantheon.

SCENE II.

Enter TRURO.

TRURO.

Halloo! Children! are ye not aſhamed? Here you are dancing, whilſt they are howling underneath.

LILLI.

Come, help me to cheer Ada.

TRURO.

What does ſhe want?

LILLI.

Do you not ſee how ſhe drowns the cotton in tears, as if ſhe intended to light a lamp to affliction, and that ſhe is actually twiſting the wick?

TRURO.

Thoſe who have no hardſhips to bear, are ſure to invent ſome.

ADA.

Do I ſuffer no hardſhips?

TRURO.

Perhaps you call it a hardſhip to gormandiſe at a dainty table, while we are forced to eat inſipid broth? to be permitted to ſtretch your limbs on ſoft mattreſſes, while we, ſcorched

with the burning ſun, and waked with ſtripes of the whip, bedew the hard ground with ſweat and blood? perhaps it is to you a hardſhip, that our maſter, who loves nothing, and nobody in the world, yet does homage to your charms?

LILLI.

You, perhaps, would call it a bleſſing that our maſter who loves nobody, ſhould endeavour with the ſame violence that the juice is preſſed from the ſugar-cane, to obtain a return of love from Ada?

TRURO.

What would you have? I envy women. Men are ſubdued by nothing but love, while women yield from obedience and it paſſes for love.

ADA.

I underſtand you;—but I have a huſband.

TRURO.

Can he deliver you?—You are not however a king's wife, that according to our laws, to touch you is death.

ADA.

It is love alone, not royal dignities that can make a woman faithful.

TRURO.

It is in your power to leſſen the ſeverity both of your fate and our's; of your's by ſubmiſſion, of our's by gentle entreaties.

ADA.

Do not torment me; my innocence is my husband's ſanctuary. With the loſs of it, I ſhould alſo be deprived of my only remaining ſupport, that of thinking of him.

TRURO.

Thou art a brave woman! but it is only now and then that the heart of man is under the dominion of virtue, while the influence of power always ſurpaſſes it.

LILLI.

If experience has taught you nothing better, it hardly anſwers the pain of being ſo old.

ADA.

There is no power ſtronger than deſpair.

LILLI.

He gave her a fortnight to conſider.

ADA.

I have conſidered the whole. He may root up the flower, but he cannot gather it.

LILLI.

Oh that our old maſter yet lived!

TRURO.

We all wiſh the ſame.

ADA.

I hope to ſee him ſoon.

TRURO.

His younger ſon, who is lately come from Europe, is like him. It is pity that he is not the maſter of this plantation.

LILLI.

What do you think, Truro? Muſt not Europe be a good country ſince men grow better there?

TRURO.

Hem! One ſwallow makes no ſummer. None of the Whites are good for any thing.

LILLI.

Huſh! the walls have ears. I hear the voice of our wicked maſter.

ADA.

The hour of trial is at hand!

SCENE III.

Enter JOHN *and* WILLIAM.

JOHN.

(*In converſation.*) No, brother, that you do not underſtand. I have never read Cicero; but if inſtead of ſtarving or whipping, I choſe to keep an orator to remind the ſlaves of their duty—

WILLIAM.

(*Muttering between his teeth*) Have ſlaves duties too?

JOHN.

Is it well in the Engliſh peaſant, when he puts the oxen to the plough, to ſhake the whip over them?

WILLIAM.

Excellent compariſon!

JOHN.

Believe me, hunger is even more perſuaſive than Fox, and a ſingle crack of the whip operates more powerfully than all the eloquence of a Burke.

WILLIAM.

If my lips are ſilent, my heart loudly contradicts.

JOHN.

Your heart! your heart! empty prating! I ſhould like to know why men are ſo ready to impute to their hearts, the enthuſiaſtic notions of their heads?—The heart is merely a lump of fleſh, nothing more. It is juſt as much heeded by the inclination, as the leg or arm.—Overload the ſtomach, and the heart will palpitate.—Our father, God bleſs him! was juſt like you; he was always talking of his heart.

WILLIAM.

Enough, brother! I only waſte my words, and I ſhould be ſorry if the reſult was to diminiſh our brotherly affection.

JOHN.

God forbid! You are miſtaken in imagining that I have no taſte for what you are pleaſed to call tender ſentiment. Only it is not ſo finely ſharpened with European air as your's; nor am I perhaps as tender as one of thoſe angels, a million of whom can dance on the point of a needle. But as an inſtance, I feel that Ada is a beautiful woman, and that I ſhall never be happy unleſs I poſſeſs her.—What think you, Ada? is the fortnight almoſt gone?

ADA.

I underſtand you. It is gone!

JOHN.

Really? Then you have kept the beſt account. A favorable ſign.

ADA.

You are miſtaken.

JOHN.

Now for your determination?

ADA.

Still the ſame.

JOHN.

You are joking, my child.

ADA.

Is it uſual to joke with crying eyes and a bleeding heart?

JOHN.

There we have it! there comes the heart again. What a damned phraſe it is! I will pawn my life your heart bleeds not a drop more than it did before. As to your tears, you may ſhed them or ſwallow them, juſt as you pleaſe. For I have no more mind to joke, and I herewith give you very ſerious notice that in four and twenty hours you are mine.

ADA.

No, you ſhall not uſe force! I am married, I love my huſband—I cannot love you—No, you ſhall not uſe force.

JOHN.

Force? Hem! ſince this fails,—I once made a wild girl ſo tame.—

LILLI.

How?

JOHN.

I had her whole body pricked with needles; then cotton dipped in oil was twiſted round her fingers, and lighted.—Three days after ſhe loved me moſt tenderly.

WILLIAM.

(*Seizing him by the hand*) Brother! Can that be true? Did you do it?

JOHN.

Moſt certainly; and I aſſure you it ſucceeded.

WILLIAM.

It is impoſſible we ſhould have been born of the ſame mother!

JOHN.

(*Coldly*) I have however heard it for certain.

ADA.

(*To* JOHN) You may put me to torture—You may break my heart—but you cannot make me unfaithful.

JOHN.

The heart ſo ſoon again! little fool, do what you will with your heart, the ſubject here in queſtion is your elegant perſon.

ADA.

If you indeed loved me, you would not wiſh for one without the other.

LILLI.

(*Cunningly to* JOHN) Why are not you in love with me?

JOHN.

Becauſe you are a monkey.

LILLI.

(*Aſide*) Hem! methinks monkeys ſuit apes.

JOHN.

Do you hear, Ada? if you would be but half as obliging as your companion, who actually offers herſelf to me—

LILLI.

Who? I?

JOHN.

Did you not juſt now put the queſtion to me?

LILLI.

Yes, and why? Becauſe I have more ſpirit than Ada, becauſe I could tear out your eyes.

JOHN.

You are two little fools, who abuſe my patience. Withdraw, I have buſineſs.

LILLI.

It appears to me that you treat love exactly like buſineſs.

JOHN.

Are you weeping, Ada?

ADA.

I am weeping.

JOHN.

Be gone, and I forbid your weeping.

ADA.

And can you forbid me to die too?

[*Exit* ADA.

JOHN.

Folly! Is not death a baby? Give a glaſs coral, and life has freſh charms.

LILLI.

(*Slily approaching him*) And flaming cotton round the fingers?

JOHN.

Yes.

LILLI.

And needles ſtuck all over the body?

JOHN.

Yes.

LILLI.

And that produces love?

JOHN.

Aſſuredly.

LILLI.

This will kill me with laughing. (*She laughs in his face and runs away.*)

JOHN.

Wicked girl! She makes Ada fly me as if I had the leproſy. (*To* TRURO) Go, old man, and fetch a bundle of reeds.

WILLIAM.

Why not ſerpents to ſting thee?

JOHN.

Ha, ha, ha, an oriental hyperbole! Out, old curled head, call the Overſeer to me. You are a very woman, when it comes to flogging.

TRURO.

Indeed maſter! you are making a fine oration about women and me. [*Exit* TRURO.

WILLIAM.

Will conſtrained love afford you any enjoyment?

JOHN.

Why not? I gather a roſe, the thorns prick a little, but ſtill I gather it, and its perfumes are not the leſs ſweet.

WILLIAM.

Sell me that woman.

JOHN.

Your humble ſervant! Here we have the Enthuſiaſt.—He preaches and preaches, runs over the moſt exalted ſentiments, and at laſt, wants to buy her for himſelf.

WILLIAM.

(*Contemptouſly*) Muſt I anſwer this?—Well, brother, I will give you a hundred guineas.

JOHN.

A hundred guineas? As much as that? No, I ſhall not part with her at preſent.

WILLIAM.

Thou art a tyrant.

(*He ſits down, and draws a book out of his pocket.*)

JOHN.

Excellent! Doſt thou learn thoſe fine fraternal appellations from thy book? What an abominable thing is reading? by this means, the mind is put into a hot-houſe and forced like a pine-apple in Europe; and then produces bad fruit. —If my father had not taught the women to read, I am ſure they would have been more reaſonable.

WILLIAM.

(*Exaſperated.*) You are right. Reading was the forbidden tree in Paradiſe.

SCENE IV.

Enter OVERSEER.

OVERSEER.

Did you ſend for me?

JOHN.

You are come too late, my anger has ſubſided.

WILLIAM.

Your anger? You ſpoke with a ſort of coldneſs which is not properly anger.

JOHN.

Why not? Some of us are as much accuſtomed to anger as a courtier is to ſmiles. I am the whole day in a paſſion, but it is never ſeen.

WILLIAM.

So much the worſe.

JOHN.

(*To the* OVERSEER.) How have you diſpoſed of the ſlaves?

OVERSEER.

Some are grinding coffee at the mill, others are ſifting roucou* in the kettles, and boiling it. The children are weeding the tares from among the cotton-buſhes.

JOHN.

Very good, but how goes on the ſugar?

OVERSEER.

I have ordered old Ben's back to be flayed, and ſalt and Spaniſh pepper to be ſtrewed on it.

JOHN.

Why?

OVERSEER.

Becauſe there was too little fire for the firſt kettle, and too much for the fourth.

JOHN.

Oh the raſcal! Why did not you order him to be ſkinned, to make him feel the more?

* A red dye from the pellicles of the ſeeds of an American tree. For a particular account of it, ſee Raynal's Hiſt. Philoſ. tom. 5. p. 18.

OVERSEER.

That was not wanted. The heat of the fire before which he is conſtantly ſweating, has ſo parched him, that at every ſtroke, the ſkin roſe from the bones as the ſhell does from the coffee.

WILLIAM.

(*Shuts up his book in a paſſion. His face reddens with indignation.*)

JOHN.

He will be too old, ſoon, we muſt let him die quietly by degrees.

WILLIAM.

Die quietly? How do you manage that?

JOHN.

Let him work leſs, and give him leſs to eat, till at laſt he goes out like a candle.

WILLIAM.

(*Repreſſing his anger*) Brother, if you will but let the devil know that you have ſet up a ſchool here, I will bet a wager he comes to take a leſſon of you.

JOHN.

Ha, ha, ha! that would be too great an honor. (*To the* OVERSEER) Have you already conducted the new ſlaves to their work?

OVERSEER.

Not yet. You know our old fooliſh cuſtom of bathing them in the ſea for ten days after their arrival, and feeding them well, before we employ them. The fools always think that we are only fattening them in order to eat them.

WILLIAM.

The queſtion is, which would be beſt?

OVERSEER.

One of them aſked me very ſeriouſly whether my ſhoes were made of negro-leather, becauſe they were black!

WILLIAM.

No very extraordinary queſtion from men who are flayed every day.

OVERSEER.

Amongſt the reſt, there is an old man, who is tormenting me daily to bring him to you. He ſays he will and muſt ſpeak to you, that he ſhall die of grief if he is not allowed to open his heart to you.

JOHN.

What does the fool want?

OVERSEER.

I have brought him here. Will you ſee him?

JOHN.

You have raiſed my curioſity, let him come in.

[*Exit* OVERSEER.

JOHN.

Do you ſee, brother, how good I am? I liſten to every old dotard. It is a weakneſs I inherit from our father.

WILLIAM.

(*Gives him a ſatirical contemptuous look, and is ſilent.*)

SCENE V.

Enter OVERSEER, *and* AYOS.

OVERSEER.

Here I bring him.

AYOS.

(*Proſtrating himſelf at* JOHN'S *feet*) Maſter, I kiſs the duſt under your feet.

JOHN.

Ariſe. I do not like that, leſs humility and more work. You are an old boy, I ſuppoſe you was ſold for a couple of yards of linen, and ſome bottles of brandy.

AYOS.

I was not ſold at all, I gave myſelf away.

JOHN.

Gave yourſelf away?

AYOS.

Or I ſold myſelf, which you will. I ſold my liberty for the only remaining comfort of my life, the hope of ſeeing my ſon once more.

JOHN.

Your ſon? Where is he?

AYOS.

Aye, where is he? That, I aſk you, my good maſter; you cannot be ſo cruel as this man who will not anſwer me yes or no.

OVERSEER.

Have I nothing to do then but to anſwer you? if I was to hold a converſation with every ſlave about his own family, the plantation would ſoon go to ruin.

JOHN.

He is in the right. Lazineſs will not do here, as in your hot ſandy deſerts.

AYOS.

Alas! I will moſt readily work, as much as an old man can, who has ſeen the banana bloom ſeventy times; only reſtore to me my Zameo! You will be a gainer by it, for with my ſon by my ſide, I ſhall grow young again, lively and active.—Joy gives ſtrength.

JOHN.

(*To the* OVERSEER) Zameo? have we a ſlave of that name?

OVERSEER.

(*With great indifference*) I believe we have.

AYOS.

Now at laſt! I thank thee for thoſe words! though you can utter them ſo coldly, they warm

me more than the hot ſpices of the Molucca Iſlands.

JOHN.

How did you gain the exact intelligence that your ſon was brought here in my ſhip?

AYOS.

Was not this the price for which I ſold my liberty? Do you think I did not know the ſhip which not a year ago carried my Zameo away? Oh! if you knew in what manner my Zameo became a ſlave—

JOHN.

I will not know it. Be gone! I have enough of whimpering.

WILLIAM.

(*Riſes*) Brother, I beſeech you, let him tell.

JOHN.

Certainly. It will be a mental feaſt for a European Philoſopher. Well, tell then.

AYOS.

I fought in the battle againſt the Negroes of Aſſa, and was taken. They ſold me on the ſea-coaſt. A wife and two ſons wept over me, then came my youngeſt ſon whom I had not ſeen for many years, love having enticed him into another country. But now that he had loſt his wife, life was become a burden to him, and hearing of my

misfortune, he flew to me, threw himself at the slave-merchant's feet, and begged that my chains might be transferred to him. The hard-hearted man beheld the fine strong youth, set me at liberty without further consideration, chained my Zameo, and pushed him down into the ship's hold. He looked once around him, on me and his brothers, smiled, and disappeared.

WILLIAM.

And why are you now stealing from him the fruits of his filial affection? Why did you renounce your own liberty?

AYOS.

Alas! my good master, my wife is dead, my sons are slain in battle, and my grand-children were taken off by the small-pox. I was alone in the world, and I had nothing left but my Zameo, who was suffering afar off for me. What could I do? I thought then, it would be better to share his sufferings, than to consume the rest of my days in solitary tears over the grave. The dead hear not my complaints, my son lives, and shall hear them.

JOHN.

Enough of your whimpering. (*To the* OVERSEER) Go, take him down to his son, and let him enjoy himself for a few minutes.

AYOS.

Alas! a few minutes is a long time for an old man!—I ſhall ſee my Zameo once more!—Can I go down without trembling?—Excuſe me, good maſter, and do not imagine that I am always ſo weak.—Oh I can ſtill work, but joy at this moment trembles in all my limbs.—(*To the* OVERSEER) I beſeech you to ſupport me.

OVERSEER.

(*Puſhes him on before him*) Along, old boy! Thou wilt go down without me.

AYOS.

(*Shaking as he walks*) Oh, yes, I willingly go —Zameo!—to thee—to thee—

[*Exit with the* OVERSEER.

SCENE VI.

JOHN *and* WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

Brother, do you know you are carrying on a vile trade?

JOHN.

How ſo?

WILLIAM.

I cannot reliſh a morſel in your houſe.

JOHN.

I am ſorry for that.

WILLIAM.

I find no repoſe in your beds.

JOHN.

I ſleep very well.

WILLIAM.

When the Overſeer flogs out the poor ſlaves at ſun-riſe, do their cries never wake you?

JOHN.

I am uſed to it.

WILLIAM.

Righteous God! is it in the nature of man to reconcile himſelf to every thing, and even to wean himſelf from common humanity?

JOHN.

What can I do? You would not have me cultivate the ſuger-canes myſelf?

WILLIAM.

And is it abſolutely neceſſary they ſhould be cultivated?

JOHN.

What a wonderful queſtion!

WILLIAM.

Tell me, brother, do you think ſlaves are men? —I bet a wager he is often aſked this queſtion.

JOHN.

I treat them as men.

WILLIAM.

(*Ironically*) Indeed?

JOHN.

I give them to eat and to drink.

WILLIAM.

You do the ſame to your dogs.

JOHN.

And they are not much better than dogs. Believe me, brother, they are a race, deſtined by nature to ſlavery.

WILLIAM.

Where has God ſtamped the mark of ſlavery on them?

JOHN.

They deſcend from Cain, they are black, becauſe the father of their family was the firſt who killed his brother.

WILLIAM.

Excellent!

JOHN.

They are cunning, vicious and ſtupid. They acknowledge the ſuperiority of our minds, and of courſe the juſtice of our dominion.

WILLIAM.

They are ſtupid becauſe ſlavery deſtroys all energy of mind; they are ill-diſpoſed, but they do not ſhew it to you, as you deſerve. They lie, becauſe no one dares to ſpeak the truth to tyrants. They acknowledge the ſuperiority of our minds becauſe we keep them in eternal ignorance; and the juſtice of our dominion, becauſe we abuſe their weakneſs.—Alas! you have done every thing in the world to depreciate theſe ununhappy wretches, and then you complain that they are ſtupid and evil-inclined.

JOHN.

But were not Negroes born to be ſlaves?

WILLIAM.

Certainly not. No man can be born a ſlave. Whether you are a prince, or a father, who gave you that right?

JOHN.

But if the Negro ſold himſelf! He is maſter of his life, why not alſo of his liberty? He himſelf fixes the price.

WILLIAM.

The liberty of man is invaluable!

JOHN.

So much the worſe for him, if he ſells me a treaſure below its proper worth. He is the fool, but I am no knave.

WILLIAM.

Sell himſelf? he dares not, becauſe he dares not do all that an unjuſt maſter requires of him as a ſlave.—He belongs to his firſt maſter, to God, who never gave him his liberty! a man may ſell his life as a ſoldier, but not the abuſe of his life as a ſlave.

JOHN.

But the greateſt part of them were made priſoners in battle; if we had not intervened they would have ſuffered death.

WILLIAM.

They never would have been made priſoners but for you. Their battles are your work. And if the conqueror makes a bad uſe of his victory, why would you be his accomplice?

JOHN.

But ſeveral were criminals who would have been condemned to death by this time in their own country.

WILLIAM.

And are you the African hangman's deputy?

JOHN.

At leaſt, are they not juſt as happy here, as there?

WILLIAM.

Then, why do they ſigh without intermiſſion after their own country? Why would they chuſe rather to live with tigers and lions than with you? Why do they poiſon and hang themſelves? Why out of nine millions of ſlaves which the new world received, are ſeven and an half dead?

JOHN.

Do other nations treat them better than we Engliſhmen?

WILLIAM.

Alas, no! The Spaniard makes the negroes companions of his indolence, the Portugueſe makes them ſubſervient to his vices, and the Dutchman abuſes them as the victims of his avarice. The Frenchman makes them bend to laborious work, and often refuſes them neceſſaries; but he ſometimes laughs with them, which lightens their miſery. The Engliſhman never laughs, never ſhews them any condeſcenſion.

JOHN.

I will level all your pretended philoſophy at one ſtroke; without us, they never would have known the Chriſtian religion.—They exchange their freedom for the ſalvation of their ſouls.

WILLIAM.

Oh Divine Lawgiver! how couldſt thou fore-

ſee that ſuch cruelties could be juſtified from thy mild precepts!—If religion ſanctifies the crime, away with it for ever! Harangue loudly, ye ſervants of the church! Preach loudly againſt it! Zeal would here be wiſdom, and ſilence a tranſgreſſion.

JOHN.

This is all idle declamation, imported from the univerſities.——At this rate we ſhall grow no coffee-trees, nor ripen any ſugar-canes. You are in poſſeſſion of a fine fortune, which our father acquired by means of the negro-ſlaves, and it makes you happy, is not that true?

[*Exit ſmiling.*

WILLIAM.

(*Alone*) Alas! he is right! I bluſh for every ſhilling in my pocket! every morſel I put into my mouth is embittered by the tears of ſuffering human nature.

SCENE VII.

WILLIAM, ADA, *and* LILLI.

ADA.

Good white man, do I find you alone? Be not angry. When, juſt now, your brother was ſo unkind to me, I plainly ſaw that it gave you concern, and it immediately occurred to me,

apply to William, he will protect thee. Good white man, I implore thee to protect me!

LILLI.

Thy eyes are like thy father's, friendly good eyes.

WILLIAM.

My dear child, would to God I could help thee!

ADA.

God will aſſiſt thee in it, certainly. I am a poor innocent creature who never cruſhed a worm deſignedly; why then am I ſo tormented?

WILLIAM.

Do you call it being tormented, to be beloved?

ADA.

And do you call that love, which your brother requires?

LILLI.

Have you forgot the burning cotton and needles?

WILLIAM.

To be crabbed, and moroſe, is a habit with him. You ſhould overlook that.

ADA.

I cannot, if I would.—I have not room in my heart for two men.

WILLIAM.

Have you left a lover behind you in Africa?

ADA.

Only a lover? much more than a lover! a husband!

WILLIAM.

It is plain you are not a European.

ADA.

We had hardly been as long married as the Banana is in bloom—We lived on the coast; the sea gave us fish, the forest behind supplied us with wild-fowl, on each side of us were the green seedlings of Turkish wheat, and in the centre of all, ourselves, and one heart betwixt us—Believe me, we had enough.

WILLIAM.

I do indeed believe thee, my good child.

ADA.

A little bag with baked Turkey-meal quieted our hunger, and when I brought home my calabash of an evening full of palm-wine, it was more refreshing to us than rum is to the Whites. And when we rested together at night on the

ſame woven mat, our ſleep was ſweeter than that of our Chief on his European carpet. Something was with us, and about us, that breathed ſerenity and a ſenſe of joy, and to which we knew not how to give a name.———It was love!

WILLIAM.

And who deſtroyed your tranquil happineſs?

ADA.

Some white men ſtole me while my huſband was abſent. They ſold Ada, the ſtolen ſlave, to your brother, but they could not ſell the loving and beloved Ada. Between thoſe walls of intwined palm-branches breathes yet the ſpirit of my love.

WILLIAM.

Of what uſe is this enthuſiaſtic fidelity to a huſband whom thou wilt never ſee again?

ADA.

I ſee him continually, and he is before my eyes every where!—Oh you muſt not talk me out of my laſt hope!—Never ſee him again?—What good can it do thee to tear from the hand of an unhappy wretch, the ſtraw to which he clings? and ſuppoſing you in the right, what is this inſtant of time to me?—this little foot of land which you call the world?—A day will come when I ſhall ſee him!—Is it not true that you

believe in a better life, where Negroes are allowed to be happy?

LILLI.

Let us laugh then at our white tyrants! This cannot always laſt.—Our Chief called himſelf maſter of heaven and earth, but the earth has obtained its maſtery over him, and has covered him. Is it not ſo? the Whites torment us for a ſeaſon, but when it grows too bad, we have a friend who is no friend to them. He bears a hideous name. He is called Death. But who would aſk the name of his deliverer? Who would take fright at the name of his benefactor?—— Huzzah, Ada! Life is only a toy; we are no longer children, we throw it away.

WILLIAM.

Cheerful girl! you ſuit yourſelf to your lot!

LILLI.

I was born in Congo. In Congo and Loango, we are ever gay; we live to-day, and enjoy to-day, and think not of the morrow. Of courſe hoſpitality dwells in our cottages, and we abhor all meanneſs. Therefore we call you Europeans cloſe-handed. We think not of the paſt, we count our years no more than we do the drops of water which the great river revolves under our feet. We believe in the great God Numbo, but who is too much exalted to care about us. In

Congo and Loango, we could laugh whole days at trifles. Our young men are excellent mimics. They underſtand imitating the cries of animals. They are enlivened whenever they hear muſic, and dancing never fatigues them.

WILLIAM.

Contented people!

LILLI.

Shall I teach you to be always cheerful?

WILLIAM.

Then thou wilt teach me what a thouſand European philoſophers have fai'ed in.

LILLI.

Nothing eaſier. Only obſerve two rules. Do nothing wrong, and riſe hungry from table. By this means the ſoul and body will always remain in health. I take care of the one, and your brother of the other. (*ſhe laughs.*)

WILLIAM.

Golden rules!

LILLI.

Why golden? I would not confide in the man who compares every thing that is beautiful and good to gold.—Rather call them rules of the ſun, for they warm the heart; or rules of death, for they teach us to die cheerfully. Thy father was well

acquainted with them. I always rejoice when I recollect how our old master died.

WILLIAM.

Thou rejoicest?

LILLI.

Yes indeed! he sat on a chair in this room——

WILLIAM.

(*Hastily*) In this room? Where? Where?

LILLI.

(*Pointing to the spot*) There he sat.

WILLIAM.

(*Agitated*) There?—Go on.

LILLI.

He called in all his slaves.—Children, he said, I am going to God.—Father, we cried, give us thy blessing!—then he blessed us, and we blessed him. He smiled---and we cried.

WILLIAM.

I see then thou canst not always laugh.

LILLI.

Why not? Do you mean because of the tears which are rolling down my cheeks? When I cry in this way, my heart at the same time laughs.

WILLIAM.

Good, amiable creature!

LILLI.

Of what uſe are ſmooth words to us? Do not praiſe us, but help us.

WILLIAM.

I cannot.

LILLI.

Why not? Are you not a ſon of our old maſter?

WILLIAM.

I am but the youngeſt brother.

LILLI.

Is it then only in the power of the elder brother to do good?---Divide your riches as you will, but the right of doing good ought to be equally ſhared between brothers.---You are ſilent? You conſider Ada and me with compaſſion?---Oh trouble not yourſelf about me; my guardian angels are Hope and Cheerfulneſs; but protect Ada, ſhe is in want of both.

ADA.

Protect me, good white man!

WILLIAM.

What can I do?---I have offered my brother a large ſum for thy liberty;---He refuſed it.

LILLI.

He refuſed money! poor Ada! if he love thee more than money, then thou art loſt!

ADA.

Oh, if thy father had lived but a few weeks longer, the veſſel was then equipping to carry me to my huſband's arms.---My benefactor died ——Well, I too can die!

LILLI.

Hear'ſt thou---Poor Ada! Look at her. Is ſhe not beautiful as the flower Glorioſa? and ſhe is ſtill more good than beautiful.---Fy! you are horrid people! we lacerate our bodies; you, your ſouls.---We believe that the ſcars on our faces add to our beauty; you conſider your vices as ornaments.---Which ought to reprove the other?

WILLIAM.

By God! not we!

SCENE VIII.

TRURO *brings in Coffee.*

TRURO.

Here is the breakfaſt. (*he ſets it on the table.*)

WILLIAM.

What ails thee? thy eyes are ſwimming in tears!

TRURO.

Oh nothing, good maſter! the planter muſt accuſtom himſelf to tears, as much as the miner

to pale faces.—If you ſhould once ſee me laugh, then you may aſk, why do you laugh, Truro?

WILLIAM.

Good God! is then Jamaica the iſland of tears?

TRURO.

It is pity that in this mild climate, and fruitful ſoil, every thing ſhould grow green, and proſper, but cheerfulneſs.

WILLIAM.

Say, what excited your tears?

TRURO.

A couple of incidents ſuch as happen every day. The firſt concerned a poor devil who was croſſing the field with a ſtick, which is abſolutely forbidden. We dare not carry arms, not even a cane to defend ourſelves from dogs, or to kill a ſerpent.—The Overſeer ſaw it, and flogged him as uſual; the ſlave whimpered and threw away his ſtick. Soon after, a mad dog attacked him, he endeavoured to keep him off with his hand, and was bit.—The hydrophobia is now come on, in two days more raving madneſs will break forth, and then he will be well.

WILLIAM.

Horrible!

TRURO.

The other hiſtory is ſtill more agreeable. It is of two brothers who work at the ſugar-cauldrons. Alas, maſter! It is a cruel buſineſs, for they are melting the whole day by the fire. The younger brother is not very healthy, he could not any longer endure it, he ran to the wood and hid himſelf. This morning, they found him. Maſter John came down, and was very angry. He ordered the eldeſt brother to laſh the youngeſt till he was half dead; and as he refuſed this office,—Ah! how could he do otherwiſe!—He himſelf was laſhed till the blood ran down his back. Suddenly, the poor fellow in his agony ſeized an ax which lay near him, and cut off his right hand, ſaying he choſe rather to be without a hand, than to uſe it againſt his brother. I came juſt at the time, and ſaw the bloody ſtump; and this, like an old fool, makes me cry.

WILLIAM.

Enough! I am quite overcome!

LILLI.

What ſay you now, good white man?

TRURO.

In this way we are treated, becauſe we are black.

LILLI.

And yet the mother's milk which we ſucked was white.

ADA.

And our blood too is warm and red.

WILLIAM.

I ſhould not wonder if it was boiling hot! or if deſpair ſhould make it flame, and you were to murder your executioner.

TRURO.

And indeed deſpair has already occaſioned many ſhocking inſtances of revenge. There are certain Negroes who amongſt their own people paſs for ſorcerers, becauſe they know how to prepare a ſubtle poiſon from particular inſects, with which they ſatisfy their thirſt for revenge. There are others, who are made ſtill more ingenious by deſpair. Two years ago, one of our neighbours laſhed his unoffending ſlave barbarouſly, and then went tranquilly to his plantation. Three little children, whom he left behind, were dragged out on the roof by the ſufferer. There he ſat, out of breath with revenge, and watching the return of his wicked maſter, who, now coming home from the field, and looking directly before him, ſaw his youngeſt ſon fall ſuddenly at his feet. He looked up, terrified—then fell the ſecond. Now, trembling,

he fell on his knees, and ſupplicated for the life of the third—but in vain!—even the third, and at laſt, the ſlave himſelf lay dead at his feet.

WILLIAM.

Horrible! Oh why do you not hide yourſelves in caverns and woods?

TRURO.

Some of us do, but if they are diſcovered, their ears are, the firſt time, cut off; the ſecond time they are ham-ſtringed, and branded on the ſhoulder. The third time, they muſt die without favor.

WILLIAM.

Is there then no court of juſtice in the country, where you might complain of your oppreſſions?

TRURO.

A court of juſtice?—We dare not even offer ourſelves as witneſſes; ſtill leſs may we be plaintiffs. A Negro has no rights. Every European, even a ſtranger may laſh him with impunity, and if the Negro lifts up his hand againſt him, it is death.

WILLIAM.

(*Gnaſhing his teeth.*) Excellent!—But does not love at leaſt ſometimes caſt a brightening ray over your perpetual night?

TRURO.

Love?—Here you are opening an old wound of mine. When I was a young, lively boy, I loved a Negro girl in another plantation; but ſuch marriages are forbidden, and I have conſequently been very unhappy!

WILLIAM.

Forbidden?

LILLI.

Is not every thing forbidden here? We may venture to marry againſt the will of our parents, but not without the conſent of our maſter.

TRURO.

When your good father made me free, I took a wife, but my children are ſlaves.

WILLIAM.

You are however permitted to have children?

LILLI.

They dare not love and honor us.

TRURO.

Nor can we leave any thing to them, we have no property.

LILLI.

And do you not imagine it muſt make a father's heart ache to ſee his children harneſſed like horſes to a carriage?

WILLIAM.

What are you ſaying?

TRURO.

She tells no lie, our maſter frequently goes out in a burning ſun, with ſix Negroes to draw him.

WILLIAM.

Holy God! is it poſſible? (*He wipes his eyes.*) I muſt drink up my tears. (*He pours out ſome coffee.*)

TRURO.

Yes, yes, my good maſter, you find a ſweet flavor in the coffee, but if you could count the bitter tears that have been ſhed over that ſugar.—

WILLIAM.

(*Juſt as he was going to drink it, puts down the cup, hides his face and runs out.*)

TRURO.

(*Following him with his eyes.*) The perfect image of his father.—God bleſs him!

LILLI.

If he was black, I ſhould love him.

ADA.

Ah! but he cannot help me!

TRURO.

When we ſhall ſtand all together, black and white, before God's throne—

LILLI.

When color ſhall be no more a crime.

ADA.

And when Nature again reſumes her rights.

TRURO.

Then ſhall no Overſeer exerciſe his whip over us! (*Exit* TRURO.

LILLI.

Heaven is ſweet! There no ſugar-canes are cultivated. (*She runs away.*)

ADA.

Oh my huſband! There I ſhall again find thee! [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A great Field, in which ſeveral Negroes are employed in cultivating Sugar-Canes, in planting, cutting, or weeding them.—In the Foreground of the Theatre, on the right hand, a Grave is ſeen, and on the left, an Arbor.*

[*The Negroes ſing at their Work, to a ſimple touching Air*;]

The bread of ſlavery, moiſt with bitter tears,
Suſtains unwelcome life thro' toilſome years;
Come, kind deliverer, death! Come, "Miſery's Friend!"
Lead to that tranquil home where ſorrows end.

During the Song, Enter WILLIAM *and* TRURO.

WILLIAM.

WHERE are you leading me? I hear ſounds of lamentation every where.

TRURO.

This is my favorite ſpot. Look around, good maſter, does your heart ſay nothing?

* The Manager will judge which of theſe employments will beſt ſuit the Theatre.

WILLIAM.

God !—This grave—

TRURO.

Your father's.

WILLIAM.

(*Throws himſelf on the grave.*) My father—my good father !—Who planted theſe roſe-trees around this grave ?

TRURO.

The poor Negroes did that, from love and gratitude. Nature has given them a heart and flowers, they have nothing beſide.

WILLIAM.

What a pious chill pervades my limbs ! (*with eyes and hands raiſed*) Father, I dare not wiſh that thy ſpirit ſhould hover over this duſt. Such a ſight, ſuch a ſong of lament would embitter to thee the joys of heaven.

TRURO.

It is a comfort to believe that he ſees and pities us.

WILLIAM.

Why was he buried juſt here ?

TRURO.

He choſe it. He uſually ſat here, and overlooked the works. If either of us had any trou-

ble at heart, he directly came and told it with modeſt confidence; and he was always aſſiſted.—But now—How often am I forced to be a witneſs of a famiſhed ſlave's preſenting himſelf before the Overſeer, folding over his ſkin like a coat, and putting out of his mouth a tongue, parched like a dry leaf. A laſh of the whip is the uſual anſwer.

WILLIAM.

What enemy of my peace inſpired me with the idea of returning to this land of torments! —But no! I have viſited my father's grave,—I will make a ſacrifice of good actions to his aſhes; and then away!—Away from this coaſt!—Whither?—To England, into the arms of that man, whoſe noble heart has made him an orator in the cauſe of humanity—to Denmark, to the feet of that prince who was the firſt to break the chains of theſe unhappy wretches, and who received tears of gratitude for gold.

TRURO.

If you had only arrived a year ſooner, you would have found it very different. How often in the evening, when our work was over, have we danced and ſung on this ſpot! our old maſter was then ſitting in the midſt of us, reviving us with a variety of liquors, and was delighted when we grew merry, when the kettle-drum reſounded, and that we beat time, clapping, on our hands.—The brandy was in thoſe days unmixed

with water, or with ſoap, to make it froth.—So little is ſufficient to animate the Negro, give him but a bagpipe and a glaſs of genuine rum, and he will work for weeks together without murmuring. Your good father was very ſenſible of that. (*He ſighs*) This is over!—Thoſe happy times will come no more.—I planted this arbor to his memory, and I ofter water it with my tears.

SCENE II.

A Negro-Woman enters with a dead Child in her Arms.

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*Wildly and out of her ſenſes*) Away! away! this place belongs to my child!

WILLIAM.

(*Jumping up*) God! what is that!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*On her knees cloſe to the grave*) Reſt quietly here, poor worm. There, underneath, reſides a good man who will protect thee.

WILLIAM.

(*Shuddering*) Truro, what does this mean? the child bleeds.

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*Looks round, laughing*) It bleeds? Certainly it bleeds. Look at theſe drops on my gown—and theſe—and theſe—one—two—three—

WILLIAM.

Whoſe child is it?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*She preſſes it in her arms moſt ardently*) It is my child!

WILLIAM.

Who killed it?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*Smiling*) I killed it.—Who but a mother could take pity on her own child?

WILLIAM.

God have mercy on thee, unfortunate mother!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Aye, God have mercy on me!

WILLIAM.

Why didſt thou this?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Ought not the mother to take care of her child?

WILLIAM.

What impelled thee to this horrible deed?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Maternal love! My poor child would have been many a long year tormented; whereas, now its torments laſted only three days.—It was born three days ago.—I was very weak and ill, the Overſeer came, and deſired me to preſs ſome ſugar between ſome heavy metal cylinders. I was not able to do this, and therefore he beat me.—(*Uncovering her ſhoulder*) See, how he ſcourged me, ſee how the ſcars of the whip extend from my neck quite down, over my breaſt. —And whenever, after, I wiſhed to give milk to my child, there came out blood.—Two days did my poor child live upon blood, which it ſucked from the ſwellings, and it cried ſo pitiably—(*Smiling*) Now it cries no more.

WILLIAM.

Ah! what haſt thou done!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

My duty. Would to God, my good maſter, that my mother had deſtroyed me at the time I was born! I have no joy in the world! God has created Blacks only to ſuffer. I was ſtole from my parents, when an infant, and ſold for a copper kettle. My days dragged on between work and hunger, and my nights were paſſed in fe-

veriſh ſleep and tears, till they gave me a huſband that I might bring more ſlaves into the world. Three times did I hope and fear to become a mother, three times I miſcarried from over-work. We are uſed worſe than dogs in the ſame ſituation, for they are ſpared and left at home; but the Negro-woman muſt work till ſhe rolls in the ſand with the pains of child-birth. This child was the firſt ray of joy that ſhone upon my life. I heard its little voice. It lay upon my breaſt—I rejoiced. I felt what joy is to a happy being!—Sweet intoxication of motherly love! Alas! it is vaniſhed.—I have been waked to new torments, to new redoubled torments. I was not to ſuffer alone, any more—this poor creature was to ſhare my torture. When the Overſeer ſcourged me—God knows! I bore it patiently, and covered my child with my arms—but a ſtroke chanced to fall on my child—I then went out of my ſenſes—I then drove a nail into its heart—It did not cry—It juſt moved once—and ſee, it is dead—would to God, my good maſter, my mother had been as compaſſionate, and had deſtroyed me at the time I was born!

WILLIAM.

(*Quite ſubdued*) My heart will break!

TRURO.

(*Wiping the tears from his eyes*) I have lived through many ſuch ſcenes, and yet I cannot grow accuſtomed to them!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Flow gently, innocent blood! flow down and waſh the bones of a man who was pious and good. Ah! here reſts a dead man—he was white, but humane. He compaſſionated me, he bought me, becauſe I was unhappy. He died ſoon after, and I am again unhappy! but this will not laſt long! No, not much longer! They will torture me for loving my child ſo much, I am ſick and weak, and ſhall not ſurvive their tortures. God be thanked! I ſhall die ſoon!—thou weepeſt!—Can a white man weep?—let me ſee—they really are tears—do not cry—give me thoſe tears—I am ſo poor, that I have no more even of them.—I waſhed my child's wound with my laſt tears. (WILLIAM *covers his face, and throws himſelf on a bench in the arbor.*) See there, a white man, who has humanity. Go down to that dead man; here above-ground, you ſtand alone among your brethren.—Hark! what was that? did not I hear the Overſeer's voice?—Good night, dear child! Sleep well—Now, they will ſcourge thy mother, but thou art taken away from miſery.—Reſt quietly upon this grave—reſt tranquilly—ſleep well—(*She kiſſes the child once more, and is going*) No, I cannot however leave it here! It is dead, but the mother's heart yet lives—Oh my child! my

child! (*She preſſes it in her arms, and runs away, with marks of deſpair.*)

TRURO.

You are crying, good maſter? Alas! that does me good!—I have not ſeen it a long time.

WILLIAM.

(*Hiding his face*) Leave me alone, Truro.

TRURO.

You are not alone. The ſpirit of your father hovers around you—the ſpirit of the father of us all! (*He kneels cloſe to the grave*) Oh thou good old maſter! Oh that I could with my nails tear thee up from the earth!

SCENE III.

The Negroes quitting their Work, and coming forward.

NEGRO.

Come brother, the Overſeer is far off.

ANOTHER.

You are praying, Truro? We will pray with you.

A THIRD.

Alas! He no longer hears us!

TRURO.

What do you want, brother?

NEGRO.

Help from our old maſter.

TRURO.

What is dead, is dead.

NEGRO.

Say not that. If he is quite dead, to what purpoſe was he ſo good? and if every thing dies with us, to what purpoſe do we ſuffer ſo much?

ANOTHER.

He will hear us. Kneel down on the grave.
(*They kneel.*)

A THIRD.

Dear maſter, help us!

A FOURTH.

Our miſery is great!

ALL.

Good old maſter, help us!

NEGRO.

My ſtrength is exhauſted.

SECOND.

My back bleeds.

THIRD.

My wounds have no time to heal.

FOURTH.

They give me bad manioc * to eat.

FIFTH.

And we are not allowed any ſleep.

SIXTH.

Neither ſleep, nor joy.

SEVENTH.

Help us, maſter, thou waſt formerly ſo good!

ALL.

Ah, thou waſt ſo good!

NEGRO.

Thou forgaveſt my diſobedience.

SECOND.

In ſickneſs, thou revivedſt me with wine.

* Le préſent le plus précieux que les iſles ayent reçu de l'Afrique, c'eſt le manioc. C'eſt une plante délicate, la culture en eſt pénible. On ne peut le faire ſervir à la nourriture des hommes, qu'après lui avoir donné une préparation très fatigante, pour extraire les parties aqueuſes qui ſont un poiſon froid, contre lequel il n'y a aucun remede connu, ou donne le nom de Caſſave à la pâte de manioc, changée en Gâteau par la ſeule, attention de la faire cuire ſans la remuer. Raynal's Hiſt. Phil. & Poli. tom 4. p. 185.

THIRD.

Thou gaveſt my old father his liberty.

FOURTH.

Thou recoveredſt my children from the ſmall-pox.

TRURO.

He was the father of us all!

ALL.

That he was.

TRURO.

Thank him yet in the grave.

NEGRO.

Reſt quietly with our bleſſing. (*All proſtrate themſelves, and kiſs the grave*)

WILLIAM.

(*In the arbor, deeply affected*) Who would not exchange the marble over the conqueror's grave for this living monument!

NEGRO.

Thy ſon is hard and unfriendly.

ANOTHER.

Huſh! rather accuſe the Overſeer.

THIRD.

Give us thy other ſon for our maſter.

FOURTH.

His perſon reſembles thine.

FIFTH.

He will be good like thee.

(WILLIAM, *quite overcome, walks out of the arbor.*)

ALL.

There he is! (*They jump up and furround him*) Be thou our maſter!

WILLIAM.

I thank you, my children! I will endeavour to mend your lot.

NEGRO.

God bleſs you!

WILLIAM.

Would it were in my power to do you much good!

NEGRO.

We are already comforted by what you ſay.

ANOTHER.

And becauſe your benevolent eyes ſay a great deal more.

THIRD.

See brothers, he weeps!

ALL.

(*Preſſing round him*) He weeps! He weeps over our wretchedneſs.

WILLIAM.

Have hope, poor men! It will be better with you. There lives a man in England who loves

you, who is day and night meditating your relief, and who, warmed with the glorious fire of philanthropy, defends your rights with fervid eloquence.

THE NEGROES.

Bleſſings light on that good man, who is a ſtranger to us!

ANOTHER.

Tell us his name.

WILLIAM.

His name is WILBERFORCE.

NEGRO.

God of Heaven! Inſcribe his name in thy book!

WILLIAM.

The ſlave-trade ſhall ceaſe. No more of your brethren ſhall be imported here.

NEGRO.

Bleſſings attend them! while we ſhall be in miſery!

WILLIAM.

And your burden will be lighter too.

NEGRO.

Conſoling words!

ANOTHER.

Hope, ſweet as palm-wine!

WILLIAM.

I will entreat my brother to make this a day of joy to you.

NEGRO.

Do ſo, good maſter, that we may not quite forget to be happy.

WILLIAM.

(*To* ZAMEO, *who a little at a diſtance from the reſt, was leaning againſt a tree*) And who are you, quiet young man, from whom no complaint eſcapes?

ZAMEO.

I am contented with my fate.

NEGRO.

He lies. 'Tis he compoſed the hymn to death, which we are always ſinging.

WILLIAM.

Do you wiſh to die?

ZAMEO.

Oh yes.

WILLIAM.

But you would prefer having your freedom?

ZAMEO.

Death makes us free.

WILLIAM.

Have you no connections in the world?

ZAMEO.

Alas! I know not.

WILLIAM.

How came you into ſlavery?—You do not anſwer?

NEGRO.

He always ſerves us ſo. He never will return our confidence.

WILLIAM.

Set him the example, and tell me, each of you, how you were betrayed out of your liberty and native land.

TRURO.

Betrayed! That is the right word. The firſt Spaniards pretended that they came from the Happy Iſland, where our deceaſed fathers and friends reſide. What poor credulous beings we were!—Whoever had loſt a huſband, a father, a ſon or a brother, cheerfully embarked, and became a ſlave.

NEGRO.

The Portugueſe ſtadtholders ſold the right of hunting men with dogs.

ANOTHER.

They mark us with hot irons, under the pretence that in Portugal none are of any value who do not bear ſuch a mark under their ſhoulder.

TRURO.

In this manner did they treacherouſly deceive our harmleſs fathers. They were marked as criminals, when in the midſt of ſerenity and innocence, they knew no tranſgreſſion. If you ſhould ever meet a company of wretches like theſe, you would take them for a ſtring of malefactors. Mind and body are both ſubdued by affliction and chains; their heads are fixed between great wooden forks, ſupported behind with iron cramps; not one can ſtir a ſtep without the other; all walk in proceſſion panting under the heavy fork.—Their fettered hands are not at liberty to wipe off the ſweat. It is with tears alone that they can waſh the blood and ſweat from their faces.—In this manner you conduct your ſlaves to market. Your cattle at leaſt go free to the ſlaughter-houſe.

WILLIAM.

God! You knew all this, and yet was not on your guard?

TRURO.

I was ſold, a priſoner of war. My countrymen fought very few battles formerly, and when-

ever they did, it was for a dozen of fiſh, or a handful of ſalt; but now they maſſacre each other daily that they may ſell thoſe who are left. Thoſe who eſcape the ſmall-pox are deſtroyed by the Europeans. We traded formerly in dried fiſh, linen, wax and ivory. But from you we have learnt to trade in men.

NEGRO.

I was violently forced away, while I was mending my fiſhing-nets without fear on the ſhore.

ANOTHER.

On board the ſhip, I loſt every thing I had, and at laſt, myſelf.

THIRD.

I ſtole a tobacco-pipe, and was ſold for that.

FOURTH.

It is only ſince the Whites came amongſt us, that we have learnt to ſteal.

FIFTH.

They have made us ſo rich in wants, that we want every thing.

SIXTH.

Neceſſity prompted my parents to ſell me when I was very little.

WILLIAM.

(*To* ZAMEO.) And now it is thy turn. Art thou ſtill ſilent?

NEGRO.

It is in vain. He never ſpeaks of his own adventures.

ANOTHER.

He lives to himſelf. He cries by night.

WILLIAM.

Have you no confidence in me?

ZAMEO.

Why do you want to ſee my wounds bleed?

WILLIAM.

I will heal them.

ZAMEO.

That thou canſt not.

WILLIAM.

Have you committed a crime?

ZAMEO.

No.

WILLIAM.

Are your ſufferings greater than thoſe of your brethren?

ZAMEO.

Alas! yes.

WILLIAM.

Haſt thou loſt more than liberty?

ZAMEO.

I have loſt all.

WILLIAM.

And with liberty, couldſt thou not regain al?

ZAMEO.

No.

WILLIAM.

Then he is the pooreſt among ye. (*He approaches him, and puts his hand on* ZAMEO'S *ſhoulder.*) Young man, if I could but gain your confidence, as you have gained my compaſſion—

ZAMEO.

Good maſter, your color does not diſmay me; I plainly ſee that you mean honorably.

WILLIAM.

Then open your heart to me.

ZAMEO.

You will have it ſo? Be it ſo! Neither levity or crimes weigh heavy on my heart. Choice gave me the fetters of ſlavery.—When I, a year ago——

A NEGRO.

(*Calling aloud.*) The Overſeer is coming.

ALL.

Away! away to work.

WILLIAM.

Remain. I will protect you.

NEGRO.

No, good maſter, you cannot. He ſcourges us. Away! Away! (*they all diſperſe.*)

WILLIAM.

Shame take the man, from whom all of them fly as from a tiger!

TRURO.

Oh! He is as ſavage as the African dog of the woods, which ſteals children and ſheep, and which none dare kill, becauſe it is held ſacred.

WILLIAM.

And in ſuch a man my brother confides?

TRURO.

Maſter Paul underſtands hypocriſy and flattery, how to torment the Negroes, and to rob his maſter. A rich man is like a ſea-dog which little fiſh are always ſucking, while they live on the ſlime which evaporates from him.—Go into the arbor, good maſter, there you may witneſs, without being ſeen, how he plagues the poor Blacks.

WILLIAM.

Oh! I have already ſeen too much! (*He conceals himſelf in the arbor with* TRURO.)

SCENE IV.

Enter the OVERSEER *and* AYOS.

OVERSEER.

There, go, and ſeek thy ſon. In the mean time I will overlook the fields. On my return, you muſt go to work. [*Exit on the other ſide.*

AYOS.

I can go no further. Expectation, impatience, anguiſh and joy, have exhauſted me.—I feel juſt as if I was wading through tall reeds, and that the ſun was darting directly on my head.—And yet—if I could but ſee him—if I could only know which is he?—(*he looks all round*)—Zameo! —my ſon Zameo!

ZAMEO.

(*In the back ſcene at work*) Who calls?

AYOS.

God! I hear his voice.—How it overcomes me.—Zameo! my ſon! (ZAMEO *walks forward, his father ſtretches out to him both his trembling arms.* ZAMEO, *frightened, ſtops a few ſteps from him. With fixed eyes, he conſiders him a moment, and then trembling, falls down on both his knees, his father totters up to him, and falls into his arms.*)

ZAMEO.

(*After a ſilent pauſe.*) No dream—no ghoſt.

AYOS.

Now I will die with all my heart!

ZAMEO.

Is it you, father?

AYOS.

It is, my ſon.

ZAMEO.

What wretch ſold thee? What devil hath robbed me of the laſt conſolation I had, that of procuring reſt to thy old age through my miſery?

AYOS.

It was my own doing, my ſon; I am come to free thee.

ZAMEO.

To free me?

AYOS.

Thou haſt worn my chains a year. Return them to me.

ZAMEO.

Never more!—How, father, couldſt thou be ſo cruel as to forſake my old mother?

AYOS.

(*After a pauſe.*) She has forſaken me.

ZAMEO.

I underſtand thee.—She is dead—(*a pauſe of anguiſh.*) But my brothers?——

AYOS.

(*Heſitating.*) They have ——— accompanied their mother.

ZAMEO.

(*Shuddering.*) Dead too! but their little children?

AYOS.

(*With a voice half ſuffocated.*) They are —— gone after their parents.

ZAMEO.

(*Wringing his hands*) All dead!

AYOS.

All dead.

ZAMEO.

Horrid echo!—Haſt thou heard nothing of my wife?

AYOS.

Nothing.

ZAMEO.

All dead!

AYOS.

At laſt there came a cloud of locuſts that ate my little rice and millet. Then I ran to the

ſhore, and would have drowned myſelf in the ſea.—Suddenly I ſaw a face, too horridly known to me. It was the ſame Captain who had carried thee to Jamaica. I embraced his knees and begged him to take me. The ſtern man enquired my price? The ſight of my ſon, I exclaimed. Then he put on a ſavage ironical ſmile, and puſhed me down into a ſmall room, where more than 400 of my brethren lay in piles upon each other; for a ſhip which with difficulty holds 200 men, has 452 ſlaves and 36 Europeans crowded into it.—They bound me and a young man together. From above, a long heavy chain was drawn through us all. None could ſtand upright without the reſt; the weary, the ſick, the ſleeping, and the dead.—Yes, dead—for putrefaction often forced us to call out to our executioners, that there was one happy one amongſt us! The other wretches were fed with peas and beans. The crying children were put into ſacks; rough men gagged their mouths. I ſlept to the ſound of ſighs and curſes; and was waked by lamentations. Here one curſed the hour of his birth; there another laughed loud in a phrenzy-fever. Here one prayed for deliverance, while another curſed his Maker. Bedewed with ſweat, we often thirſted for a drop of water, and our parched tongues were moiſtened only with our tears. A breath of freſh air was a rare enjoyment. If ever we came on deck,

we looked back to our native country till we grew petrified. This profpect threw feveral of my companions into a filent melancholy, the melancholy proceeded to deep affliction, and at laft to furpaffing defpair. The wifh to die enflamed every heart, the name of death refounded from all the lips around. Our executioner had foreſeen this, and endeavored to trick even death itſelf. They would not leave us the ſmalleſt ſtrip of linen to cover our nakedneſs, for fear that we ſhould hang ourſelves with it.

ZAMEO.

Oh father! You give me my own hiſtory!

TRURO.

(*In the arbor, with a ſigh*) And mine.

AYOS.

It is in the power of a tyrant to deprive us of all the bleſſings of heaven, excepting death! He can embitter that, but he cannot prevent it. My unhappy companions found every contrivance fruitleſs, to eſcape from their miſery. Here lay one, who ſtarved himſelf to death; there another who fractured his ſkull againſt the ſides of the ſhip; here, a third ſuffocated himſelf by ſwallowing his tongue.

ZAMEO.

Ceaſe, father. Was I not myſelf a witneſs of theſe horrid expreſſions of deſpair?

TRURO.

(*In the arbor*) And I!

AYOS.

See, my ſon, I ſuffered all with fortitude, for the joy of ſeeing you once more, and looſing your chains.

ZAMEO.

Alas! You know not what you aſk; your feeble old age is incapable of ſupporting ſuch miſery.

AYOS.

Have I not gone through the worſt already? —Here is freſh air.—Oh! with air, bread, and a good conſcience! all the reſt is light to bear.

ZAMEO.

You know not the fate that awaits you. Of an evening when every bird ſleeps at liberty on its twig, you will be ſhut up in a little low houſe. A room, twenty feet long, wainſcotted off into three diviſions, is entirely filled with ſlaves. You have light and air juſt peeping through the door which is ſeldom opened, and in the remoteſt ſeparation, you have no light nor air at all.—A hard plank ſerves you for bed; a barrel to hold roots, a watering-pot, and a calabaſh—See, theſe are all thy riches. If, notwithſtanding the miſery and groans around you,

it ſhould be poſſible for you to obtain towards the morning a little ſleep, the whip of the cruel Overſeer ſuddenly wakes you; it wakes you from a ſwoon into which you are ſinking from weakneſs; they even try to wake you from death, when you are at your laſt ſtruggle. You muſt work while you are dying. Reſt is only for the dead. The European ſerves us as we do the palm-tree; we extract the juice, and let the dead ſtick remain. They are unprofitable ſerpents of Fetiche, which we muſt feed ſumptuouſly.—Our food is frogs, lizards, field-mice, and manioc. —Manioc! a poiſon for every beaſt, only corrected by particular preparation. But who attends to a diſh that is to be ſerved up only to ſlaves? Of courſe, follow the moſt horrible diſeaſes, the moſt loathſome ſores—a deſerted death! Do you feel, father, all the wretchedneſs expreſſed in theſe few words, a deſerted, painful death?—

AYOS.

(*Affected, falls into his arms*) I ſhall not die forſaken; my ſon will never forſake me!—

ZAMEO.

Oh my father! why haſt thou deprived me of my ſweeteſt conſolation, that of dreaming thou wert either in liberty or dead!

AYOS.

Am I unwelcome to thee?

ZAMEO.

Torment me not!—Oh bleſt moment! when the father for the firſt time entered his ſon's houſe as his gueſt!—How every thing is embelliſhed by the hand of affection! how was the beſt of every thing, for many long weeks before, preſerved for this dear viſit! how joyfully we, all of us, waked on that happy day! To-day! to-day he comes!—how the little children, peeping through the windows, cry, Is he not coming yet?—Now they ſpy him, now they ſurround him, lead him, and pull him in.—One brings him this, another that, each will have his ſhare, each will be taken notice of, the leaſt as well as the biggeſt.—He ſmiles, and heaven ſmiles with him; he is happy, and the cottage becomes a palace. He gives his bleſſing, and it becomes a temple!—Oh my father! how often with delight has my warm imagination repreſented this picture to me, when yet I had a houſe, and a wife lying in my boſom.—But here, where I have nothing to refreſh thee with—No mat, whereon to lay thy head—no ſweet fruits—no draught of palm-wine.

AYOS.

(*Exhauſted and leaning on him*) Filial love is more reviving than palm-wine.

ZAMEO.

(*Anxious*) How art thou, father?—Art thou ill?—

AYOS.

Be quiet, my dear ſon—'Tis only joy—fetch me a draught of water, I am thirſty.—

ZAMEO.

Quick as an arrow!—In the mean time, be ſeated on our old maſter's grave. This little hillock covers a ſaint, this earth exhales ſtrength. (*He leads the old man to the grave, and is going out.*)

SCENE V.

Enter the OVERSEER.

OVERSEER.

(*Lays hold of* ZAMEO) Where are you going?

ZAMEO.

To fetch a draught of water for my father.

OVERSEER.

Nonſenſe! Noon is yet far off, away to work.

ZAMEO.

Did you underſtand me? the old man is thirſty.

OVERSEER.

Did you underſtand me? Away to work.

ZAMEO.

Monſter! and if it coſts me my life—(*He attempts to go on.*)

OVERSEER.

Not from this ſpot! (*He treats him roughly.*)

AYOS.

Oh my ſon!

ZAMEO.

(*Stooping down*) See'ſt thou now, father? Did I not ſay true?

(WILLIAM *and* TRURO *coming out of the arbor.*)

WILLIAM.

Stop! no cruelty in my preſence!

OVERSEER.

The dog rebels.

TRURO.

Be quiet, Zameo; I will refreſh your father with a draught of rum. (*He reaches a calabaſh to* AYOS.)

ZAMEO.

The great Numbo bleſs thee!

AYOS.

And return it to thee in thy children!

TRURO.

Then will he give me a ſon like thine.

WILLIAM.

(*Puts money into* AYOS's *hand*) Take this, old man, and comfort thyſelf.

ZAMEO.

Thanks! thanks! It is giving it to me.

OVERSEER.

Sir William, you ſpoil the people, your goodneſs blinds you. You know not theſe men. They are all lie and deceit, they are ungrateful and perfidious, they would with all their hearts poiſon every one of us. (ZAMEO *jumps up ſuddenly, ſeizes an inſtrument which lies in his way, and kills a ſerpent with it, which at that very moment was going to ſting the* OVERSEER.)

OVERSEER.

(*Alarmed*) What are you doing there?

ZAMEO.

(*Holding up the ſerpent*) Do you not ſee? (*He flings it away.*)

TRURO.

Ah! Paul! it was very near over with you.

WILLIAM.

(*Runs up to* ZAMEO) Come to my arms, noble youth!

AYOS.

(Cheerfully) Good maſter, take back your gold. My ſon did that! who is richer than I?

ZAMEO.

Does that merit praiſe? I did it without reflecting.

TRURO.

What think you now, Paul? Are the Negroes verily ſuch perfidious creatures?

OVERSEER.

(Shewing ſome uneaſineſs) What kind of ſerpent was it then?

TRURO.

The moſt poiſonous; a ſpectacle-ſnake.* In a few minutes, you would have fallen dead on the ground.

OVERSEER.

Indeed? A ſpectacle-ſnake?—Hem! Zameo, that was kind and brave of thee; there, take this crown, and drink till Sunday.

ZAMEO.

Give me the crown on ſome other occaſion. What I did, coſt me nothing, and I ſhould repent it, if I was paid for it.

* It is ſo called from the ſtrange reſemblance on the hood, or back of its head and neck, to a pair of ſpectacles. It is alſo called the Cobras de capello, le ſerpent couronné des Indes, and the hooded ſerpent.

OVERSEER.

Fool!

WILLIAM.

Man! It was always my opinion, till now, that God had formed us of the ſame materials; I was under a miſtake, he made you of better.

ZAMEO.

My good maſter, I do not underſtand you.

WILLIAM.

Go, Paul, he has made you doubly aſhamed.

OVERSEER.

Nonſenſe: he did his duty.

WILLIAM.

Zameo, I pray thee, honor me with thy friendſhip.

ZAMEO.

Maſter, you mock me.

WILLIAM.

My heart is no inſulter.

ZAMEO.

I am only a poor ſlave.

WILLIAM.

(*With enthuſiaſm*) Thou art the richeſt man on earth!

AYOS.

He is my ſon! He is my ſon!

WILLIAM.

Happy father!

ZAMEO.

You make me aſhamed.

SCENE VI.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN.

Well! What are you ſtanding there idling?

OVERSEER.

(*Shakes the whip*) Out to work!

AYOS.

(*Rouſing himſelf, and falling at* JOHN'S *feet*) Maſter, when your Captain formerly purchaſed me, and payed a few crowns for an infirm old man; there came this active, ſtrong youth, who ſuffered himſelf to be fettered in my place, and has been above a year cultivating your fields. He took my chains voluntarily, I come now voluntarily to looſen them.

JOHN.

A moſt fine exchange.

ZAMEO.

(Throws himſelf at JOHN'S *feet)* Liſten not to the old man's requeſt! He is ſick and weak, he can be of little uſe; I am healthy and ſtrong, I can work longer.

JOHN.

Of courſe.

AYOS.

You have paid for me, not for him. You have no right over my ſon.

ZAMEO.

No right? did I not put on thy chains unforced? Has he not liked the exchange?

AYOS.

I once conſented to it. But now I demand the reſtoration of the place which belongs to me. I am your father, and I deſire obedience from you.

ZAMEO.

Never! Affection and duty outweigh thy commands.

AYOS.

Attend not to him! What I aſk is juſtice.

ZAMEO.

Attend not to the intoxication of fatherly love! think of your own intereſt.

JOHN.

Fear not. Ha! ha! ha! I muſt laugh indeed. You are quarrelling for the privilege of being my ſlave, when in fact you both are my ſlaves already.

ZAMEO.

Only I! I put on his chains.

AYOS.

Only I! You bought me.

JOHN.

It is all the ſame. I keep you both.

AYOS.

That you cannot. I will inform againſt you.

JOHN.

(*Laughing*) Where?

AYOS.

Before God!

ZAMEO.

My father is free, he came a volunteer in your ſhip; you have paid no price for him.

JOHN.

So! You reckon as nothing the paſſage, and eating and drinking? Who has paid me for that?

ZAMEO.

(*Jumping up, goes to the* OVERSEER, *and ſays in a paſſion,*) Give me now the money which you offered me.

OVERSEER.

Leave me at peace.

WILLIAM.

Brother, I conjure you by the grave of our father, to act humanely. Give both of them their liberty!

JOHN.

And this you would call acting humanely? I ſhould rather think it like a fool.

WILLIAM.

How much would you aſk for the young man?

JOHN.

Pay me a hundred guineas, and I will give you the old man into the bargain.

WILLIAM.

(*Draws out his pocket-book.*) Here they are.

JOHN.

Are you in earneſt?

WILLIAM.

I never ſport with human happineſs.

JOHN.

But there are ſerious follies too.

WILLIAM.

Take the money. Zameo is mine.

JOHN.

As you pleaſe.

ZAMEO.

(*To* WILLIAM) Joyfully your ſlave! but my father!

WILLIAM.

He is free. Come here, old man.

AYOS.

My ſon, help me! help me to the feet of the good white man! (ZAMEO *raiſes him up, and leads him to* WILLIAM, *before whom he proſtrates himſelf on his knees.*)

WILLIAM.

Kneel not, old man, you make me aſhamed. Thou waſt free, and thou art free. But with all thy liberty, it would be eaſy enough for thee to die with hunger, if I did not make thee a preſent to protect thee in future from want.—There! I give thee thy ſon, he may work for thee. (*He puſhes* ZAMEO *into the arms of* AYOS.)

TRURO.

(*Affected*) Spirit of my old maſter! look down here, and rejoice!

JOHN.

Brother, if you go on in this way, I ſhall have to congratulate you ſoon on becoming a beggar.

WILLIAM.

I would ſooner beg for bread, than for a cheerful heart. Every ſtranger may give you bread, but a cheerful heart can only ſpring from yourſelf. (*The father and ſon waking from their ſilent extaſy.*)

ZAMEO.

(*Embraces* WILLIAM'S *knees*) Fetters are needleſs where the affections are rivetted by beneficent actions. Thou haſt left me free, and I am thy ſlave for ever; with my arms in bonds, I could have eſcaped, but thou fettereſt my heart—I will never forſake thee!

AYOS.

I cannot ſpeak—the great Numbo ſees my heart and my tears—He will influence the benevolent Fetiche to be favorable unto thee, that as long as thou liveſt, thy cup may be full of palm-wine, and thy heart of joy!

TRURO.

Good maſter, how happy you muſt be! Not all the gold of Tombuto would I take for this reviving ſpectacle.

WILLIAM.

(*Affected.*) What think you, brother? How many rich plantations would you give for ſuch a moment?

JOHN.

I would not give a hundred pounds of ſugar.

WILLIAM.

(*Folds father and ſon in his arms.*) Stay with me as long as you like. I am delighted in ſeeing thoſe about me who love me.

TRURO.

Oh! We all love you!

WILLIAM.

Would to God I could give freedom to you all!

JOHN.

You would make an excellent economiſt.

WILLIAM.

Brother, a petition to you. Give your ſlaves this day, a holiday. Let them dance and drink. I will be anſwerable for the expence.

JOHN.

I ſhould be too great a loſer to-day. It may happen another time, in bad weather.

WILLIAM.

The ſky is clear, and we are glad: a glad heart

and ſun-ſhine are well-ſuited. Come, brother, let thy ſoul for this once be tuned in uniſon with ours.

JOHN.

You will make a child of me. Well, let it be! to contradict your notion of my hard-heartedneſs.

WILLIAM.

I thank you.

JOHN.

(*To the* OVERSEER) Go and laſh them hither, that they may dance. [*Exit* OVERSEER.

WILLIAM.

And let your girls come down alſo. They are ſtill more perhaps in need of a little gaiety than theſe poor wretches.

JOHN.

All, all may come. Go, Truro, fetch them.

TRURO.

Readily! readily! It is long ſince I had ſuch a commiſſion. For above a year the poor children have not been out of their cages.

[*Exit* TRURO.

WILLIAM.

Thou art ſo quiet, Zameo?

ZAMEO.

Excuſe me, good maſter! I cannot ſpeak—Nor dance neither.

AYOS.

He is in the right. Joy is a child, it can only ſtammer.

WILLIAM.

Nor do I want him to expreſs his joy in words. But I ſhould like to ſee it ſparkle in his eyes.

ZAMEO.

My joy is ungrateful in ſhewing itſelf ſo ſparing of looks and words—but the ſurpriſe has ſtunned me.—Allow me a moment to myſelf.

[*Exit* ZAMEO.

WILLIAM.

He is not in ſpirits.

AYOS.

A ſecret uneaſineſs preys upon him like the guinea muſcle-worm.*

WILLIAM.

Then his liberty is no bleſſing to him, for nothing but employment will lighten affliction.

* The Guinea-worms or Dracunculi, or Muſcle-worms, are a ſort of long ſlender worms which breed in the muſcular fleſh of the arms, legs, &c. and are more frequent in ſome parts of Guinea than elſewhere, particularly on the Gold Coaſt about Anamaboe and Cormantyn. It is lodged between the interſtices of the membranes and the muſcles, where it inſinuates itſelf to a prodigious length, ſometimes exceeding five ells, and produces ulcers.

AYOS.

Do you think that none work but ſlaves?

JOHN.

No ſlave, no flogging: and without flogging little work.

(*The ſound of Kettle-drums and other Negro Inſtruments is heard at a diſtance.*)

JOHN.

They are coming. They need not be told twice to dance and drink.

SCENE VII.

Male and Female Negroes, with Muſic, enter with the OVERSEER.

WILLIAM.

(*Meeting them*) Enjoy yourſelves, my children! and celebrate this day to the honor of your old maſter's memory.

Chorus of Male and Female Negroes.

Welcome joy to every breaſt!
Welcome to the heart oppreſt!
Live to-day,
Dance and play,
Thought and care be far away.

Shall tomorrow's ſlaviſh toil
Preſent joy and freedom ſpoil?
Live to-day, &c.

(A Negro with a White Muzzle, and another with an Iron Collar and Horns, walking up to WILLIAM.)

The FIRST.

Alas! my good maſter! we cannot enter into this gaiety; I can hardly draw my breath.

The OTHER.

I cannot move my neck, how could I dance?

WILLIAM.

Brother, what means this?

JOHN.

He with the collar on, had run away; he wears horns in order to be known. He who has the muzzle is a ſot.

The NEGRO.

Alas! I own I drank now and then to forget my miſery.

WILLIAM.

I intreat you, brother, take off their yokes, at leaſt for to-day.

JOHN.

But they do not dance with their mouths, or their necks; their feet are free.

WILLIAM.

(Supplicating) Let tranſgreſſions and puniſhments be forgotten to-day.

JOHN.

You will ſpoil theſe people for a month to come. Well, Overſeer, take off their ornaments. (*It is done*; *and both the Negroes gratefully embrace* WILLIAM'S *knees, and cheerfully mix among the reſt.*)

SCENE VIII.

Enter TRURO, ADA, *and* LILLI.

LILLI.

May I truſt my eyes? if here is not dancing and joy!

JOHN.

Come, Ada, look, this is all owing to my love for you.

ADA.

I thank you.

LILLI.

Indeed?—If you begin to grow good, then you are verily in love. We muſt take advantage of ſuch a whim, as of ſun-ſhine in the rainy months. Come! brothers and ſiſters! (*She takes a Negro by the hand*) Come, my Congo countryman, you muſt dance with me. (*The Drum ſounds, male and female Negroes dance their favorite dance, the* Calenda, *beating time with their hands.*)

WILLIAM.

(*To* ADA.) Mix with the gay.

ADA.

Muſt I caſt a gloom over their joy?

JOHN.

Will you not dance, Ada?

ADA.

Excuſe me---I have ſprained my foot.

JOHN.

Sit here then, in the arbor, and enjoy the cheerful ſight.

ADA.

(*Seats herſelf in the arbor, and grows melancholy.*)

JOHN.

Paul! my pipe! (*they bring him a lighted pipe, he ſeats himſelf on his father's grave, and ſmokes thoughtleſsly.*)

WILLIAM.

(*With folded arms, leans againſt a tree, and looks on at the dancers. After a few minutes,* ZAMEO *appears.* WILLIAM *meets him.*) Are you come at laſt? Forget your ſorrows in honor of the day, dance, and drink.

ZAMEO.

Let me alone, my good maſter, I have no joy in either.

WILLIAM.
I intreat you.

ZAMEO.
You may command.

WILLIAM.
No command. Do it for love of me.

ZAMEO.
For love of you? That I will.

WILLIAM.
Come here, I will find you a partner.

ZAMEO.
They are all the same to me.

WILLIAM.
(*Conducts him to the arbor.*) My good girl, I pray thee, dance with this young man.

ADA.
(*Looks up.*) Zameo!

ZAMEO.
Ada! (*they fall into each other's arms.*)

JOHN.
(*Jumps up.*) What is this?

ZAMEO.
Ada! my wife!

JOHN.
Tear him from her.

WILLIAM.

Brother! what a ſight!

(*The dance ſtops. All the Negroes and Negro-ſlaves collect round this group.* ADA *faints.*)

JOHN *and the* OVERSEER.

(*Laying hold of* ZAMEO.) Slave! let go!

ZAMEO.

(*Shaking them both off.*) Begone! ſhe is my wife! no power on earth ſhall tear her from me.

JOHN.

Chains here!

WILLIAM.

No violence, brother, I have bought him.

JOHN.

(*To* ZAMEO.) Retire! or you are a dead man.

ZAMEO.

I will ſooner die than leave Ada!

JOHN.

Come up, ſlaves! Overſeer, exerciſe the whip! pull him from her, as you value your life!

(*The ſlaves fall upon* ZAMEO, *and ſeparate him, and brave his furious defence of the lifeleſs* ADA.)

WILLIAM.

(*Who in vain endeavoured to protect* ZAMEO.)

From this time, I renounce thee as my brother!

JOHN.

As you will. The girl is mine! (*he folds her in his arms.*)

ZAMEO.

(*Looking that way.*) My wife in his arms! (*he falls down ſenſeleſs.*)

The curtain falls.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

(ADA'S *Room.*)

ADA *continues in a fainting fit on a ſopha.* LILLI *ſits near her and endeavors to recover her.*

LILLI.

SOME ſigns of life at laſt.

ADA.

(*Waking.*) Where am I?

LILLI.

In your Lilli's arms.

ADA.

Oh! you wake me from a ſweet dream. Only think, I was dreaming—that it ſeemed to me as if—God! what could it be!—Was it a dream?—

LILLI.

Would to heaven!

ADA.

I was in Zameo's arms—

LILLI.

You were torn from each other.

ADA.

(*Jumping up.*) Ah! I did not dream it! Where is he? Where is my Zameo? (*She runs to the door, which ſhe finds faſtened.*)

LILLI.

You might ſave yourſelf that trouble. Alas! the door is locked and bolted, as the hearts of white men are.

ADA.

(*Shakes the door.*) Open it! Open it! Mercy! —(*She comes up haſtily to* LILLI.) Lilli, what does this mean? Have they killed him? Tell me, tell me the truth!

LILLI.

Not yet, for what tranſgreſſion had he committed?

ADA.

His love for me is a tranſgreſſion.—Oh! Zameo here, and Ada ſeparated from him! (*She runs again to the door*) Open! Open!

LILLI.

You will put the whole houſe in an uproar.

ADA.

What care I for the houſe, for the whole world! I will go to my huſband! I will go! I will go! (*She tries to ſpring the door with violence.*)

LILLI.

You cannot.

ADA.

Alas! I cannot! Nor yet can I ſtay here!—(*She runs to the window and ſcreams out.*) Help! Help!—God! Nobody hears me!—(*She comes to* LILLI, *and falls on her knees before her.*) Oh thou confidant of all my afflicted hours! my dear, beſt Lilli! help me!

LILLI.

How can I——

ADA.

(*Writhing her arms towards Heaven.*) But God! thou canſt! thou haſt formed hearts for love, and this man for my heart! thou haſt given wings to the pigeon, and courage to innocence!

—Well! I will jump out of the window! (*She runs towards the window.*)

LILLI.

(*Stepping before her.*) Are you delirious!

ADA.

Is the anguiſh of an affectionate wife a delirium? Leave me! a good angel will protect me!

LILLI.

I ſhall not leave you. You are endangering your life.

ADA.

Can I riſk leſs for him! better my life than my innocence! away! away! leave me!

LILLI.

(*Keeping her back with effort.*) Never!

ADA.

(*With concern.*) And you too!—you!—my anguiſh does not affect you—you have never loved! (*She flies again to the door.*) Zameo! Zameo! open! open!—ah! I hear the key clink—or is it chains?—Lilli, ſupport me—he comes—

SCENE II.

Enter OVERSEER, *and* AYOS *behind him.*

OVERSEER.

What a noiſe! would you turn the houſe out at window?

ADA.

Where is my huſband?

OVERSEER.

In ſafe cuſtody.

ADA.

Mercy! lead me to him!

OVERSEER.

You muſt not go out of this room.

ADA.

Tiger! you have a human face! have pity!

OVERSEER.

'Tis in vain.

ADA.

Hangman! tremble at the courage then, of an affectionate wife! (*She attempts to force her way out, the* OVERSEER *throws her on the ground.*)

OVERSEER.

Feeble creature! from this time, you remain impriſoned, our maſter will have it ſo. However, I bring you company here; this old man wanted to come to you. Keep yourſelf quiet, girl, and do not attempt to ſwim againſt the ſtream. Old man, I ſhall fetch thee again in a few minutes. (*He goes out and locks the door.*)

LILLI.

I ſhould like to know what feat of honor the Devil will one day give this man in hell.

AYOS.

(*Overwhelmed with grief.*) My daughter!

ADA.

(*Raiſing herſelf ſlowly.*) Who art thou, old man?

AYOS.

Zameo's father.

ADA.

Thou his father? Thou my father! (*ſhe embraces him*) God be thanked! here then is a man who underſtands me, who loves my Zameo; not as I love him—no! no! I am his wife. You are only his father;—but you can comprehend me, though my diſtreſs confuſes me; your heart beats quicker when I repeat his name; you are not cold like her——

LILLI.

I forgive you in your grief.

ADA.

Oh father! Why did you curſe your children?

AYOS.

Curſe?

ADA.

Could they be ſo miſerable if your bleſſing had been on their marriage?

AYOS.

Bleſſing you, I go to ſleep every evening, and wake every morning; bleſſing you, I ſhall ſome day fall aſleep for ever, and wake beyond this world.

ADA.

Where is my Zameo?

AYOS.

He lies bound under yon tree, and with his teeth he is gnawing the cords.

ADA.

Down! down! with red hot tears will I burn the cords to an aſh!—oh father! ſave! ſave thy children.

AYOS.

What can a feeble old man do?

ADA.

Let us fly to the foreſt, to the mountains—

AYOS.

Fly? my good child! we are rigidly watched.

ADA.

So many, however, have eſcaped, to whom the mere thirſt of liberty lent means and cou-

rage; oh! love is more mighty than liberty! come! come! it will ſucceed! and if thy feet are too weak, thy children will alternately carry the loved burden. Away! away to the mountains! there we ſhall be free as in the temple of Fetiche at Malfi.

AYOS.

Fruitleſs all! your maſter watches over the other ſlaves only with an eye of intereſt, but that of jealouſy is perpetually fixed on you and Zameo.

ADA.

I will deform my body; I will tear my face with my nails! I will become hideous as a bat hanging to the fig-tree by its claws.—Zameo will love me ſtill!

AYOS.

My good Ada! your anguiſh, your rage will deſtroy our laſt hope.

ADA.

Hope? Is there yet hope? oh I will grow gentle as a dove. See, I am quiet—quite quiet —What would you have? Quickly! what do you mean by hope?

AYOS.

With the greateſt difficulty, and by means of a lie, have I ſucceeded in making my way to you. My ſon, your huſband, is in danger of his life.

ADA.

Of his life? ah! open! open! (*ſhe ſhakes the door violently.*)

AYOS.

Hear me.

ADA.

Zameo in danger of his life! while I am to liſten to you! open! open!

AYOS.

You will haſten his death.

ADA.

(*In an agony.*) How—what muſt I do then?—Oh God! what muſt I do then?

AYOS.

The wicked John has threatened Zameo with a cruel death.—William ſpoke in vain with noble warmth for him. Zameo ſmiled and was ſilent. Then I threw myſelf on my knees in deſpair, and entreated, and promiſed to prevail with you to yield to your wicked maſter. Go! he wildly cried; uſe your endeavors, it is the only way to ſave your ſon.

ADA.

The only way? he is then loſt! did Zameo hear theſe words?

AYOS.

He did hear them.

ADA.

And what ſaid he?

AYOS.

He raiſed his eyes to Heaven, and ſhook his head.

ADA.

I thank thee, Zameo! I thank thee for this loud teſtimony of my fidelity! that look to Heaven, that ſhaking of the head, oh! this was more than words! never, never ſhall the tyrant fold thy faithful wife in his laſcivious arms! thou canſt die! and I too!

AYOS.

Nor indeed did I come here to beg my ſon's life at ſuch a price. But diſſimulation, dear Ada, diſſimulation may gain us time, and time —deliverance.

ADA.

Diſſimulation! look at me! look how I tremble in every nerve, feel how my cheeks burn, my breaſt how it throbs; can I rule my pulſe? Can I now diſſemble?

AYOS.

But your huſband's life——

ADA.

Can I work enchantments like our Prieſts of

Fetiche?—Go, tell your ſon he may reſt ſatisfied, I am worthy of being called Zameo's wife.

AYOS.

Muſt he die?

ADA.

Not without me!

AYOS.

And what is to become of me?

ADA.

Be a ſcreech-owl at midnight, a ſpectre on our grave.

AYOS.

Is it for this that I have been tranſported over the ſeas amidſt a thouſand cruelties?—

ADA.

Huſh! my heart has no room for thy troubles. I can hear only Zameo's groans, I can ſee only his bonds.

AYOS.

Which you will not looſe!

ADA.

Are only thoſe in bonds who have cords around them? Alas! there are inviſible iron fetters which no mortal can wrench! both ſoft and firm are the bonds of virtue, no force can looſen its ſtrong ties, no ſword divide it from my ſoul! it

has guided me from childhood to the age of woman, it presided over my marriage, it has attended me in all my wretchedness, nor will it forsake me at the hour of death.—Away! amulet formed of serpents heads, which a priest once gave me! (*she tears it from her neck, and casts it from her*) virtue is the only amulet! it cools in feverish heats, and warms in feverish chills! with virtue, as with love, one may live happily under a roof of palm-leaves! virtue and love give a life of serenity, and a gentle death.—Ah! what slumbering vigor is awakened in me! I am no more what I was, my heart expands, my bosom swells, some being which I do not know inspires me, an inward glow destroys fear and dries up my eyes! I have no tears—I tremble not—I can meet death!—Go, old man, say to my Zameo, thou hast found me thus; go, say to my tyrant, I await him.

AYOS.

(*Folds her in his arms.*) Ada! I am proud of being the father of thy beloved!

SCENE III.

The OVERSEER *opens the door.*

OVERSEER.

Out, old man! you are wanted.

AYOS.

(*Reaching out his hand in great concern to* ADA.)
We ſhall ſee each other again!

ADA.

Free from all chains.

AYOS.

God give thee fortitude!

ADA.

Thee and me!

OVERSEER.

Come, old man!

ADA.

May not I go with him?

OVERSEER.

No.

ADA.

Monſter! I laugh at you. Farewell, father! my heart follows thee.

OVERSEER.

Mad woman, conſole yourſelf with words. (*He leads out* AYOS, *and ſhuts the door.*)

ADA.

(*Eagerly to* LILLI.)—Thou really lov'ſt me, Lilli?

LILLI.

Doſt thou not ſee what tears I ſhed over thee?

ADA.

Thou canſt help me.

LILLI.

I?

ADA.

Furniſh me with a knife.

LILLI.

A knife? for what?

ADA.

I do not abſolutely know, but I want a friend in neceſſity.—It gives tranquillity to be able to command one's own deſtiny.

LILLI.

Ada! you have ſome horrid deſign in your head.

ADA.

Deſign? No. I ſwear to you I know not what I would have. The ſtorm bends the tree here and there, and the weak twigs yield to the ſtorm. Whether this arm is to ſave my innocence, or whether God has ordained me to be the avenger of thouſands, I know not; but let me have a knife, that I may feel compoſed.

LILLI.

I have none.

ADA.

You will find no difficulty in eluding our ſpies. They do not watch you. Happy girl! they do not make love to you. Slip out as ſoon as you can.—Poiſon or a dagger will be equally welcome. Sifter! ſifter! ſave me!

LILLI.

As ſoon as I can.

ADA.

You promiſe me?

LILLI.

(*Shedding tears.*) I promiſe you.

ADA.

Well, monſter! in this manner I laugh at your power!

SCENE IV.

Enter JOHN.—LILLI *during this Scene glides out unremarked.*

JOHN.

(*Still in a cold, ſatirical tone.*) I hear you are reſolved to make an heroic ſacrifice to conjugal fidelity?

ADA.

Reſolved? are love and averſion, things to reſolve upon? I love Zameo, I abhor thee! the ugliеſt Negro of Bamba would be more welcome to me, than you.

JOHN.

Charming. You play your part in a high ſtyle. But it is a tone that does not ſuit me; I muſt beg you to take another key.

ADA.

No, nothing but this, and the rattle of death, will you ever hear from me.

JOHN.

Indeed? little obſtinate fool! Do not abuſe my patience. You ſee me placid; but one word, one look, and tortures ſhall be prepared for thee.—

ADA.

Love covers even a rack with roſes, and diffuſes peace upon a death-bed.—

JOHN.

Well, that we ſhall ſee, but you will not be mine?

ADA.

Never.

JOHN.

Does not the death of your husband terrify you?

ADA.

I die with him.

JOHN.

Perhaps—Perhaps this very day.

ADA.

I take you at your word.

JOHN.

Be reasonable, my girl, I warn you for the last time. E'en keep your heart for Zameo. The habitation of the heart is in a castle of the air, it feeds on the perfume of flowers, and intoxicates itself with dew; sun, moon, and stars are its confidants, but the earth is a stranger to it. In short, it never was created for this world, or for me. But you possess another jewel, personal charms, visible to my eyes, sensible to my feelings; a jewel which you may dispose of without your heart. This may remain Zameo's property; but I bought the other with money, and yet my generosity makes me a petitioner to you for it.

ADA.

I cannot give away the property of another.

JOHN.

Of what uſe will your charms be to a dying huſband?

ADA.

A dying huſband?

JOHN.

You chuſe it ſhould be ſo.

ADA.

But not without me?

JOHN.

Immediately, and without you.

ADA.

No! no! not without me. Do what you will, it ſhall not be without me.

JOHN.

It is in your power to ſave him; you can deliver both.

ADA.

Kill me, deliver Zameo!

JOHN.

Only one word, or one look, you are mine, and he is free.

ADA.

Can only guilt ſave his life?—then I am a widow!—

JOHN.

You ſhall be one, and you ſhall witneſs for hours together by what means. Already the flame kindles in which the pincers will be heated, which are to tear his fleſh piecemeal from his bones.

ADA.

(*Shuddering, and after a pauſe*) Oh, that I durſt hope to move you by my anguiſh and my prayers.

JOHN.

Try what obedience will do.

ADA.

(*Kneeling before him.*) When, trembling, I embrace your knees—

JOHN.

(*Looking at her laſciviouſly.*) Dear beautiful girl!

ADA.

When I ſhed ſcalding tears on your hand—

JOHN.

Come to my arms.

ADA.

Learn to know the tranſports of a great mind, which has enjoyment in contributing to the happineſs of others. Let our raptures be your joy.

JOHN.

One good turn deſerves another. Yield, and I will yield; obey, and you ſhall command.

ADA.

My trifling charms will fade—the flower which to-day yields a perfume, will be out of bloom to-morrow—You yourſelf will grow old, and your ſenſuality will be ſilenced—but the recollection of a good action will never be ſilent—It will proclaim itſelf loudly in the hour of your death—

JOHN.

Spare your fine phraſes. I am reſolved to die in your arms.

ADA.

You will kiſs nothing but tears on my lips—You will repoſe on the boſom of a corpſe.

JOHN.

My love will recall you to life.

ADA.

(*Riſes*) Oh God! all is in vain.

JOHN.

All is in vain.

ADA.

(*Coolly.*) Well! I defy your cruelty and my fate.

JOHN.

Indeed? Are you abſolutely determined?

ADA.

Abſolutely.

JOHN.

You perſiſt in your refuſal?

ADA.

I perſiſt in it.

JOHN.

Even if Zameo dies?

ADA.

Even then.

JOHN.

Excellent! Admirable! Now then, come and ſee. (*He drags her to the window.*)

ADA.

(*Gives one look from it, ſcreams, falls back into* JOHN'S *arms, and ſtruggles to deliver herſelf.*)

JOHN.

(*Holding her faſt*) No; you eſcape not. Do you ſee Zameo kneeling there under the tree? Do you ſee the drawn ſword over his head? how he raiſes his deſponding eyes to heaven; and accuſes you for being the cauſe of his death.

ADA.

Stop! Stop!

JOHN.

He ſtill lives, you may yet deliver him ; a ſingle moment, and all is over. When I draw my handkerchief from my pocket—at the firſt ſign I make—(*He feels for his handkerchief.*)

ADA.

(*Claſping him round with mad terror.*) For the love of God !—Stop!—

JOHN.

Are you mine?

ADA.

Oh !—I cannot—

JOHN.

Now then, I muſt—(*He draws out his handkerchief.*)

ADA.

Stop ! Stop !—Yes—No—Yes—

JOHN.

You will?

ADA.

Away with your handkerchief.

JOHN.

You will?

ADA.

I will—(*She falls on her knees, fainting.*)

JOHN.

At laſt! recover yourſelf; he lives.

ADA.

(*Feebly*) He lives—

JOHN.

Yet more, he is free, and I will return him to his native country, loaded with preſents.

ADA.

Without me!

JOHN.

You will grow reaſonable, and will one day laugh in my arms at your own folly.

SCENE V.

Enter WILLIAM.

How is this, brother? do you dare inſult a ſlave of mine? Can you ſuffer your ſervant for an hour to laugh at my entreaties, and deſpiſe my threats?

JOHN.

Be quiet. Your ſlave lives, and is to live. Ada is mine.

WILLIAM.

I am come to tell you that we part for ever.

JOHN.

As you like.

WILLIAM.

I am going.

JOHN.

To-day?

WILLIAM.

To-day.

JOHN.

I muſt bear it.

WILLIAM.

I take Zameo with me.

JOHN.

Certainly. But Ada is mine.

ADA.

I am your's. Only allow me to recover—Give me time to dry up my tears—I will endeavor to learn to ſmile—only till to-morrow—

JOHN.

To-morrow? Well, this muſt be the very laſt delay.

ADA.

And then one requeſt more—It ſhall be the laſt.

JOHN.

Speak.

ADA.

Permit me to take leave of Zameo.

JOHN.

You make great demands.

ADA.

But he was my huſband—I ſhall never ſee him again—and I have loved him ſo!—He goes to Africa—I have yet an old mother there—little brothers and ſiſters—ſo many directions to give—which may appear trifling to you, perhaps—little commiſſions—only intereſting to my heart. If your wiſh to ſee me in future cheerful and ſerene, is ſincere, grant me this laſt prayer.

JOHN.

You pray ſo ſweetly; your influence over me is greater than you think. Do not abuſe it.

ADA.

Only one more quarter of an hour, juſt to looſen the bands of love and fidelity as far as regards this world.

JOHN.

Well then, one more quarter of an hour is your's; on this condition, that the Overſeer is to be at hand. I will ſend Zameo to you. Com-

fort him, let your heart attend him on his journey. I have no objection. [*Exit* JOHN.

SCENE VI.

WILLIAM. ADA.

ADA.

God be thanked! a reprieve!

WILLIAM.

A ſhort reprieve! Of what uſe can it be to you?

ADA.

But a minute is wanted to die.

WILLIAM.

Not ſo, my good girl. Make uſe of the influence of your charms to mend my brother, to make him more gentle, more humane. Eaſe the burden of your poor companions, and your ſacrifice has its reward.

ADA.

Nothing but love can work ſuch miracles.

WILLIAM.

He loves you.

ADA.

You force me to ſmile. Lead me into a dark cellar, where a miſerable lamp burns, and tell me the ſun ſhines.

WILLIAM.

What other hope is left in your noble ſoul?

ADA.

None! You cannot waſh my face white, or I his confcience. This is over. No floods of tears can efface a letter in the book of deſtiny. Neceſſity produces tranquillity. I am tranquil.—My future days were in a miſt, I ſhuddered; the miſt diſperſed and I ſmiled, for Death walked forth from the cloud.

WILLIAM.

Noble girl! You muſt live. I undertake to deliver you—One more attempt.

ADA.

I thank you for the attempt as ſincerely as if you ſucceeded; but all is fruitleſs! You know not your brother. Give me up, and ſtretch out your benevolent hand to my Zameo. He will go with thee—Oh! pity him in the firſt moments of delirious grief! leave him not alone, put out of his way every mortal weapon; and when his affliction ſoftens, give him the greateſt of all reliefs, give him tears; renew his melancholy by praiſing me; talk frequently of me; remind him of the days of his youth, of our love; he will weep, and be more tranquil—You are affected?—Farewell, good white man; leave me now. You have heard that my Zameo is coming; let me enjoy this laſt happy moment.

WILLIAM.

(*Reaches out his hand to her*) Take courage! if

half my fortune can yet deliver you, it ſhall make you free.

[*Exit* WILLIAM.

ADA.

I am already free! whoever has no dread of death, is always free.—Zameo is coming—What a voluptuous anguiſh draws my heart together—the feelings of a bride—poor Ada! the grave is thy marriage-bed!—but where is Lilli?—She promiſed, however—if ſhe breaks her word—and if I ſhould then want courage or ſtrength to daſh my head againſt the wall—Oh Death! my deliverer! appear to me in a gentle form, in the form of my huſband!

SCENE VII.

Enter LILLI.

ADA.

Ah Lilli! my good girl! you have not forgotten me!—Do you really bring me my laſt conſolation? (LILLI *weeps*) You weep? You do not anſwer me?—Oh God! you have not ſucceeded?

LILLI.

Yes I have.

ADA.

(*Eagerly*) Oh give it me! give it me!

LILLI.

Ada!

ADA.

No weakneſs in theſe moments! there is but one means of ſaving my innocence, and—God be thanked!—that means is in my friend's hand! do not defer, give it me, and leave me.

LILLI.

(*Lifting up her hands to pray, and remaining ſilent.*)

ADA.

What can you want? It is for me to pray; have pity on my innocence!—Zameo is coming to take leave of me—I have only one other cruel ſtep to take—perhaps the hand of my huſband will conduct me.—Alas! thou canſt ſee the anguiſh and deſpair that are raging in my breaſt, and yet delay!—

LILLI.

(*Draws out a knife and reaches it to her, trembling.*)

ADA.

(*Graſps it eagerly*) Thanks! thanks! (*She embraces* LILLI.) I thank thee, God! (*She kiſſes the knife.*) I am not forſaken!—Now go! farewell, my friend! God reward you for your true affection! for every tear which you have ſhed

with me, for every ſmile which you have promoted. Viſit my grave ſometimes, gather the flowers which are foſtered by thy Ada's duſt.——Farewell!—leave me!—(LILLI *falls in tears upon her boſom.*) Affectionate, tender girl, weep not—be tranquil.—My night is paſt—rejoice with me!—the morning dawns!—Go! God bleſs thee! (LILLI *tottering ſome ſteps towards the door, ſobs, and looks round ſorrowfully.*)

ADA.

(*Stretches out her arms*) Lilli! once more!

LILLI.

(*Throws herſelf into her arms. A ſilent pauſe.*)

ADA.

(*Freeing herſelf.*) Enough! We ſhall ſee each other again!—Sooner or later—We ſhall ſee each other again—there! where time is not reckoned. Go! Go! thy tears ſhake my reſolution.

[*Exit* LILLI, *covering her face and ſobbing aloud.*

ADA.

(*Sighing deeply.*) Ah! this is over! the bond of friendſhip is torn aſunder—God grant me the courage and ſtrength to tear one ſtill ſtronger—the bond of love!—They are only however terreſtrial threads—in the realms above, thou wilt

renew the tie—Hark—a footſtep—what emotions I feel—my knees tremble—the door ſhakes—Oh God—

SCENE VIII.

ZAMEO *enters.* ADA *flies into his Arms.*

(*A long pauſe of ſilent rapture.*)

ZAMEO.

Thou lov'ſt me ſtill!

ADA.

Thou lov'ſt me ſtill!

ZAMEO.

I find thee once more faithful.

ADA.

Faithful till death!

ZAMEO.

(*Tranſported*) I fold my faithful wife in my arms!

ADA.

For the firſt time theſe two miſerable years!

ZAMEO.

And for the laſt time!

ADA.

How much I have ſuffered!

ZAMEO.

Can it be more than I?

ADA.

More than thou.

ZAMEO.

Sleeping and waking I conſtantly ſaw thee in another's arms—Who can have ſuffered more?

ADA.

—— —— Thou!

ZAMEO.

I tried to hope for thy death. The hope of thy death was my laſt wretched conſolation—Who can have ſuffered more?

ADA.

—— —— Thou!

ZAMEO.

And who ſhall ſuffer more?

ADA.

Not thou. What ſtill torments thee? thy faithful wife can but die.

ZAMEO.

Ada! That is the language of unſpotted innocence.

ADA.

It is.

ZAMEO.

Dare you look ſteadily in my eyes?

ADA.

I dare.

ZAMEO.

And woe unto me if I could miſtruſt that angelic look! My faithful wife under a thouſand misfortunes!—God! thou haſt compreſſed together in one little drop the whole joy of my life! I am happy! let me die before this moment is run out!

ADA.

(*Embracing him*) Let us die!

ZAMEO.

Oh Ada!—ſtill one queſtion—read it in my agitated look—When thou waſt torn from me—my ſweeteſt hopes then lay in thy boſom—art thou ſilent?

ADA.

Grief for thee—the loſs of thee—Ill-uſage—and a violent fall in a ſwooning-fit on the ſteps of the ſhip's hatches—gueſs the reſt—

ZAMEO.

(*Overwhelmed with ſorrow.*) Then I am not a father!

ADA.

I am not a mother.

ZAMEO.

Well, one duty the leſs.

ADA.

One ſtep nearer death.

ZAMEO.

They are determined to ſeparate us.

ADA.

Never!

ZAMEO.

From the coaſt of Europe my eyes will wander over the ocean, and ſeek thy dear image in every cloud that riſes from the ſea.

ADA.

Wilt thou quit me? make me again a widow? expoſe my helpleſs innocence to violence?—Thou canſt not! No, my beloved, thou wilt not!—Give me death!—If on that dreadful evening, a fancy of mine could ſend thee to the wood to procure me a fruit which has poiſoned our lives; if it was impoſſible for thee to refuſe me that little requeſt; oh liſten equally this day to thy wife's prayer of bitter anguiſh! I aſk the greateſt bleſſing! give me death! death by thy hand!

ZAMEO.

(*Loſt in terror.*) Ada! Thou art raving.

ADA.

When it was thy perſuaſion that an unſatisfied craving would prejudice my child, then thou didſt not heſitate, or deride my extravagance. Was the child more precious to thee than my innocence?—Deliver me! my huſband! my beloved! pity my deſpair! This is the laſt moment in which love can act! It will never return! Take this knife, and plunge it in my breaſt!

ZAMEO.

(*Shuddering.*) Ada! My blood congeals.—

ADA.

I have ſworn thee eternal fidelity, I have kept my oath, but who will be anſwerable to me for the future? Who will protect me from force? From the tender feelings of compaſſion, when our companions in miſery kneel around me, and with tears of blood aſk the ſacrifice of my innocence?—What hand ſhall I implore, if thine repulſe me?—No flaſh of lightning comes to ſtrike me! No grave opens to ſwallow me up!—My huſband flies, and leaves me helpleſs!

ZAMEO.

Cruel wife! Thou art raking up my heart.

ADA.

Oh Zameo! take courage! let me die thy faithful wife!—They who are conquered, lay

waſte their fields that the victor may not enjoy the fruits; they maſſacre the young children to ſave them from ſlavery—and would it be poſſible for thee to remain quietly on ſhore, while the waves ſwallow up thy beloved?—Pity me! give me death! Thinkeſt thou I fear it?—Oh no! Death is my friend, he is my brother! I know him; I have often earneſtly invited him! Introduced by thee, he promiſed to appear to me; introduced by thee in a friendly ſhape will he be moſt welcome.—Wherefore delayeſt thou? take this knife—here is my breaſt.—

ZAMEO.

Never!

ADA.

Is this thy oath to love? that nothing but death ſhould ſeparate us? Violence ſeparates us—thy oath is forgotten—thou trembleſt—and art flying!—Now then learn from me in what manner thoſe who are married may ſecure fidelity to their duties, even in the grave!—God! have pity on me! All have forſaken me! guide my hand that I may not miſs! And give me the crown of unſpotted innocence! *(She attempts to plunge the knife in her breaſt.)*

ZAMEO.

(Falls into her arms.) God! what are you doing!

ADA.

Will you hinder this too? Will you deliver me yourſelf into the tiger's mouth? A few more minutes, and he will come to take me away; you will hear my groans—you will hear the laſt ſigh of my dying innocence—with inſulting ſmiles will he preſent himſelf before your eyes—triumphantly exclaiming, 'Tis over!—

ZAMEO.

(*Wrenching the knife eagerly from her hand.*) Give me!

ADA.

At laſt! Now I again feel that thou loveſt me. Oh do not heſitate! embrace me, and plunge it here. (*She points to her heart.*)

ZAMEO.

After a pauſe, filled with the moſt tormenting indeciſion.) I cannot!

ADA.

Take courage! what is it you fear? Have you no more truſt in the faith of our fathers? Have you forgot that our ſoul flies back with the laſt ſigh to its native country? there we ſhall walk in the cool ſhades of ever blooming palm trees; there the ſpirit of my unborn child will meet me ſmiling!—Strike the blow, my beloved! reſtore he mother to the child!

ZAMEO.

My wife! what is it thou requireſt of me?

ADA.

Love for love, fidelity until death! ought not I to aſk it?

Enter OVERSEER.

OVERSEER.

Well! Is this chattering nearly at an end?

ADA.

Oh leave us one minute more; indulge me with but one other ſingle minute to bid my huſband the laſt farewell.

OVERSEER.

Our maſter is tired of waiting, and Zameo muſt go immediately; Maſter William is ready to depart. [*Exit* OVERSEER.

ZAMEO.

(*Trembling.*) Away!

ADA.

Doſt thou hear?—the clock ſtrikes—now or never!—Zameo! my huſband! ſuffer me to pronounce thy name with innocence till death! pity me! caſt me not away in deſpair!

ZAMEO.

Take compaſſion on my raging anguiſh!

ADA.

Thou muſt go—one minute more, and we are parted.—But only death can part us.—Couldſt thou go away, and leave me behind, as the Whites forſake their harlots? Oh then thou haſt never loved me! then no warm African blood flows in thy veins. Liſten to an example that happened a few years ago in this plantation; liſten to it, and bluſh!—*Two Negroes, warm friends, loved the ſame Negro-woman with equal paſſion. The girl would not decide between them, ſhe would not mark any preference. They one day followed her into the wood; there they fell on their knees before her, waſhed her feet with their burning tears, ſuddenly aroſe, embraced her in the deepeſt affliction, and both at once fixed a dagger in her heart. Do you doubt it? Every child will relate the ſtory to you. Theſe were FRIENDS, doſt thou hear? One friend could not yield to the other; but thou, thou wilt deliver me into the hands of a tyrannical White. She was a woman, only beloved—I am thy wife! and thou wilt debaſe me to be the harlot of a monſter. (*She drops down before him, and embraces his knees.*) Zameo! hear for the laſt time the voice of thy faithful Ada! in a very few moments, thou wilt hear the voice only of ruined

* A Saint Chriſtophe. See Raynal's Hiſt. Phil. and Pol. tom. 5. p. 212.

innocence! it will cry woe on thee! woe on the weak, hard-hearted man! give me death that the bleſſing of love may accompany thee over the ſea!

ZAMEO.

(*Diſtracted*) Come to my arms.

ADA.

(*In his arms.*) Give me the laſt kiſs.

ZAMEO.

(*Kiſſes her. A noiſe is heard without.*)

ADA.

Oh quickly! they are coming! (*She hides her face on his ſhoulder. He turns his away* ☞ *and holds up the knife, at this moment*)

☞ (*and plunges the knife in her boſom.* ADA *falls,* ZAMEO *helps her to ſink gently to the ground.*)

ADA.

Thanks!—It gives me no pain.—(*She dies without agonies.*)

(ZAMEO *ſtands petrified near the dead body, the bloody knife in his hand; his body trembles and his eyes roll.*)

SCENE IX.

Enter JOHN, WILLIAM *and* TRURO.

JOHN.

Why any longer indulge this amorous dalliance?—Oh! what is that! (*All run up,* ZAMEO *ſtands unmoved.*)

SCENE IX.

Enter WILLIAM, AYOS, TRURO *and* LILLI.

WILLIAM.

Happy children! you are ſaved.

AYOS.

No more parting!

TRURO.

You are free!

LILLI.

(*Folds* ADA *in her arms.*) Oh my ſiſter!

WILLIAM.

Help!

TRURO.

(*Stooping over the dead body.*) There is nothing to be done—poor woman!

JOHN.

Raſcal! What haſt thou been doing!

ZAMEO.

(*Staring ſenſeleſsly round at them all.*) What do you want? What do you want here?

WILLIAM.

(*Takes him gently by the hand.*) Unfortunate man!

ZAMEO.

Who are you?

TRURO.

(*Pointing to* WILLIAM.) Thanks to him!

AYOS.

He has given away half his fortune.

WILLIAM.

For uſurer's intereſt.

(ADA *and* ZAMEO *fixed and inſenſible to all preſent.*)

TRURO.

Are you dumb?

AYOS.

Recover yourſelves, dear children.

WILLIAM.

Ah! what is that! Zameo! what means that knife in your hand?

WILLIAM.

Your friend.

ZAMEO.

I have no friend. The only one I had, I have made over to my wife, as her companion.

JOHN.

Wretch! Who will aſſiſt me to invent new torments?

ZAMEO.

(*Walks towards him, holding up the knife.*) Away! keep away from this body!

LILLI.

God! of what a calamity had I been very nearly guilty!

AYOS.

(*Shaking his ſon by the arm.*) Zameo! do you not hear?

LILLI.

Ada! collect yourſelf!

TRURO.

Joy overcomes her ſenſes.

AYOS.

Thy wife is reſtored to thee.

LILLI.

Zameo is thine.

JOHN.

Help! he will murder me.

ZAMEO.

Let none come too near this faint! ſhe was my faithful wife! Triumph! ſhe has remained faithful unto death!

JOHN.

(*To the* OVERSEER, *who enters.*) Call help here, and bind this madman.

ZAMEO.

Not a ſtep nearer, or you are a dead man!

ZAMEO.

(Recovering himſelf the firſt. He lets fall the knife, proſtrates himſelf on both his knees, and lifts his trembling hands to Heaven) God!—a moment later—what would have become of me!—

AYOS.

(Pointing to WILLIAM.) Here ſtands your deliverer.

ZAMEO.

(Turning to WILLIAM.) Oh!—words—words—

ADA.

Are you not deceiving me?

LILLI.

He has given up half his fortune.

ADA.

And is Zameo mine?

WILLIAM.

Let him alone, brother; deſpair knows no fear.

ZAMEO.

I ſwear by Ada's blood that no force on earth ſhall ſeparate me alive from this body!—Where am I—What has happened to me—What a miſt ſurrounds me—What floats yonder, ſparkling ſo through the miſt?—continually riſing—continually more diſtant—it ſmiles—it makes ſigns—Who art thou?—Come down—nearer that I may know thee—Ah! my faithful

WILLIAM.

Thine.

ADA.

(*Totters to* WILLIAM, *and kneels close to* ZAMEO. *Her bosom panting violently. She tries several times to speak*) I—God!—oh!—thou—(*she faints away.*)

WILLIAM.

(*Wiping his eyes.*) God! what a sweet reward!

ZAMEO.

(*Takes* ADA *into his arms; the rest form a group round the lovers.*)

JOHN.

(*Walks in with paper and pens in hand.*) Here, brother, first of all sign your name.

WILLIAM.

With all my heart. (*He signs.*)

JOHN.

And I must entreat that you will never beg at my door.

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wife even unto death!—She stretches out her arms to me—she points to the bloody wound—I! did I shed thy blood?—I was thy deliverer!—Yes, this smile of gratitude rewards my love—blessed spirit!—even thy dead body smiles—Oh Ada! Ada! (*He throws himself on the corpse, and covers it with kisses.*)

JOHN.

(*To the* OVERSEER.) Now is the time, lay hold of him by the back.

WILLIAM.

Brother, I am richer than you.

JOHN.

Much good may it do you.

[*Exit* JOHN.

TRURO.

(*Takes poſſeſſion of the pen with which* WILLIAM *ſigned, and hides it carefully in his breaſt.*) This pen is henceforth my richeſt poſſeſſion. None but the angel of God when he marks down this deed in the book of life, will ever dare to aſk it of me.

[*The curtain drops.*]

THE END.

ZAMEO.

(*Plunges the knife into his own breaſt, falls forwards on the body, and exclaims*) My faithful wife even in death!---

(*All ſhudder.* JOHN *and the* OVERSEER *ſtare at him wildly.*)

WILLIAM.

(*Haſtily advancnig towards* JOHN.) Curſe upon thee, murderer!

[*All remain motionleſs. The curtain falls.*]

THE END.

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